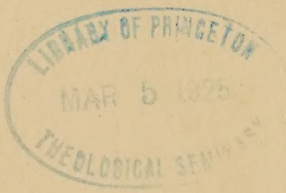

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Mores catholici.

Mores Catholici;

OR,

AGES OF FAITH.

[Kenelm H. Digby]

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MORES CATHOLICI;

OR,

AGES OF FAITH.

THE FIFTH BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

At the fourth counsel of the mystic song a sudden lustre, like the golden beams which brighten up the horizon at the evening hour, illuminated my heart. Methought a countless multitude of men, of every age, and order, and degree, passed before me. Emperors and princes were there, and mitred fathers, and whole hosts wrapped up in sable weeds; nor were wanting the ideal comrades of our youth, steel-clad knights, and gentle poets of the bower and hall; grave magistrates too followed amidst a throng of citizens and peasants, in which were some who toiled in trades laborious which seem base to the pride of mortals, and others who craved alms for sweet charity, and around each did shine an unimaginable light, encircling him as a luminary of eternal vision, which clearer than with any voice proclaimed his everlasting princedom. These were all they whose wishes tended to justice; for they shouted forth "Blessed," and ended with "I thirst." O how after each pause the harmony sounds more and more strange to ears of flesh and blood. We know, indeed, that all spirits on this earth hunger and thirst, as all mourn. Who has not observed, while wandering on the shore of brief life with wretched men, the careful provision made to satisfy the thirst for riches, the thirst for singularity, the thirst for novelty, the thirst for change, the thirst for honours, the thirst for the first seats, and for hearing Rabbi, the thirst for knowledge,

perhaps, so praised by that Chœronean sage, who says, "that letters and philosophy should imprint in our soul a passion similar to thirst and hunger, which would evince its power if we were deprived of them;" but unless when enjoying such visions from reverting to the traditions and monuments of ages of faith, where, O where is there any indication discernible among Adam's children of attention to the thirst for justice?

"My soul thirsteth after thee," said holy Israel's king. "Mark," adds St. Augustin, "how he thirsted. There are who thirst, but not after God. Whoever feels the ardour of desire, that desire is the thirst of his soul. And see how many desires are in the hearts of men! One desires gold, another possessions, another cattle, another houses, another honours. See how many desires, and how few men there are who ever say, 'my soul thirsteth after Thee,' for men thirst after the world, and they know not that they are in the desert of Idumæa, where their souls ought to thirst after God *."

In submitting history to the investigations required here, there are many and various points to be kept in view. We should, in the first place, remark, how the need of a divine object for the wants of the soul was recognized, from which in a great measure followed the offices and festivals of religion, which must, therefore, be surveyed in order. This research will demonstrate what a zeal for religion animated men in all classes of society. And thus far our attention will seem to have been confined to verify the existence of the thirst which is blessed: but from this point, its fulfilment will be our theme; for I shall then proceed to show in how admirable a manner the religious sentiment was reduced to action, which will lead on to a particular investigation of the state of morality in the ages which we review: when I shall have illustrated this statement by the evidence of contemporaneous authorities it will be necessary through regard for the mistakes and errors of later times, to show on what principle that whole system of morality depended, and what was its peculiar tone. After which inquiry, I shall bring the sixth book to an end.

All ages have been characterized by certain leading passions, which have impelled men to pursue some parti-

* Tractat. in Ps. 62.

cular object of apparent good. Some, like the epoch which is distinguished by the rise of the new opinions in the fifteenth century, have been ages of avarice, of the reign of gold, when men thirsted after riches as the supreme felicity for which they were ready to make the sacrifice of their souls, pledging them to Satan, and of their bodies, literally offering them to the Jews. Others, like those we read about in times more remote, have been ages of what was vainly termed military glory; others, like those associated on every tongue with names illustrious, ages of art and literature, because though no error of philosophy and no temporary delusion of the multitude could totally suppress the cry of nature, yet during those intervals, the possession of gold, military glory, art, and literature, were held up to the admiration of men who always assent to a resolute affirmation, as being the proper object and the farthest end of their desires and activity. We judge thus of times prior to Christianity from what we find in the writings of their eminent men, and from what has been transmitted to us respecting their customs and institutions, and by using the same process of investigation in reference to the middle ages, we shall find reason to conclude, that during the long period which they comprise, the object recognized as being the legitimate end of all mortal desire, of all civil legislation, and of all individual exertion, was not gold, not military glory, not art or literature, but, strange and wondrous as it may sound to many, the eternal happiness of the soul, or the fulfilment of justice in accomplishing the will of God. The conclusion would not be that these were ages of perfect justice or of social perfection, which can only reign within the supernal city of God triumphant. Nay, where souls are imbruted in matter, the face of external things may often seem less disturbed than where men of desire with heavenly thirst inspired, are struggling to set them right; but that the ruling passion which can be always discerned in the history of these times amidst the innumerable disorders to which as at all other periods of the world men were subject, cannot be otherwise designated than as the thirst after justice; and if the proof be demanded, we find it in the institutions, legislation, and whole form of society which distinguished them, for which no parallel can be found in the annals of mankind, and which no ingenuity can trace to any other origin.

The blessed mourning from which we have so lately turned seems to present itself to us again in this place; for in the thirst after justice lies the secret of the inexhaustible tears and profound genius of the middle ages. Precious tears, which flowed in limpid legends, in admirable poems, in sublime imagery. Yes, these complaints which they make of the course of things around them, from which modern writers attempt to deduce such calumnious inferences, prove only that they felt the eternity of that mystery which had its consummation on Calvary. They saw, as a living historian remarks, that Christ was still on the cross, and not likely soon to descend from it—that the passion continues and will continue. Behold, these old statues in the cathedrals of the middle age. See how they implore with joined palms the long wished for and terrible moment when man for judgment is to wake from clay, wake for that great sentence of universal retribution which is to put an end to the ineffable sorrow which has so long oppressed them. The present race of men are accustomed to look with indifference at the great crimes of nations, referring them either to the blind decrees of inexorable fate, or only founding on them commercial speculations, with the hope of enriching their own coffers. France, encouraged by some secret source of meanness and profligacy in the administrators of a greater power, is thus permitted to run her career from Ancona to the Tagus, unstigmatized by common voice, as if all sense of shame and honour were extinct in human breasts; but the cry of the middle ages in view of the calamities and injustice of men, while waiting for the hour of Almighty vengeance, might remind us of those words from the summit of the mystic cross, "Tristis usque ad mortem."

The sages of antiquity were not wholly insensible to the necessity of having in view amidst the perturbations and vicissitudes of life, a divine instead of a human end. Well had the Athenian in Plato maintained *χρῆναι τὸ μὲν σπουδαῖον σπουδάζειν, τὸ δὲ μὴ σπουδαῖον μὴ* *, and Plato himself continually shows the importance of having one supreme object, to which looking always, we may direct all our words and actions. He would have this question constantly addressed to his disciples, *Ὦ θαυ-*

* De Legibus VII.

μάσιε, σὺ δὲ δὴ ποῖ σκοπεῖς ; τί ποτ' ἐκεῖνό ἐστι τὸ ἓν * ; profound and searching words, at which even the children of light might sometimes tremble. Cicero in explaining why philosophy does not produce equal effects upon all minds, adduces the disposition of the youth with whom he converses, to feel unsatisfied with every thing human, as an evidence of the superior nobleness of his nature, and of its capabilities to profit by philosophy. "Te natura excelsum quemdam videlicet, et altum, et humana despicientem genuit †." Thus we read of Schiller "his mind was not of that sort for which rest is provided in this world." Faith imparted the privileges of genius, so as to make applicable to every man the mystic name of that founder of the religious metropolis of the Gauls, *ποθεινὸς*, the man of desire in whose breast was extinguished the expectation and even the desire of happiness on earth. His could only be a life of wishes, of longing, of labour, and restlessness ; it must be made up all of sighs and tears, it must be all made of service, all made of fantasy, all made of hopes and fears, all adoration, duty, and observance, all humbleness, all patience, all purity, all trial. But while the thirst of the world appears in that real heart-rending sadness, which no imagination can ennoble, the affliction of soul arising from the thirst for justice, is always sublime in its expression, and full of ideal grandeur, as in the piercing melodies of the choir. It was, however, in the schools of the true philosophers, and in the ages illuminated by the light of faith, that the vague and imperfect speculations of the ancient sages assumed the character of exact knowledge. "The reasonable spirit," says Louis of Blois, "is so noble, that no frail good is able to satisfy it ‡." "Mundus propter te factus est," says St. Bernard, "ideo mundum non ames, quia mundus non est te dignus, quum sis eo longe dignior." Fallacious are the things which cannot always remain with us ; things, adds St. Gregory, "which cannot expel the want of our minds." "Great is the dignity of the rational creature," exclaims Hugo of St. Victor, "to whom nothing less than the supreme good suffices, and great is its liberty,

* Id. Lib. XII. † Tuscul. II. 4.

‡ Ludovic. Blosii Instit. Spirit. cap. I.

since it cannot be compelled to accept it *." St. Augustin had said the same. "Nothing temporal can satisfy the soul, whose seat is eternity †," a proposition admitted by the modern poet, though with a senseless restriction.

> ——————— "There is a fire
> And motion of the soul which will not dwell
> In its own narrow being, but aspire
> Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
> And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
> Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
> Of aught but rest; a fever at the core
> Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore ‡."

The feeding of this fire is nevertheless represented by Plato, not as a fatal exercise, but as preserving the sustenance necessary for the intellectual health. "The entire soul," saith he, "in the best natures, receives a more honourable condition from possessing temperance and justice with wisdom, than the body acquires strength and beauty from health, in the same proportion as the soul is more honourable than the body; therefore, whoever has sense, will live, making all things tend to this end; in the first place honouring instruction which gives him such a soul, and despising every thing else §." How brightly that heavenly fire did burn even in the breast of warlike men in the most chivalrous ages, may be witnessed in Godfrey, when in a vision he is represented beholding the contrast of heaven and earth.

> ——————— "He bended down
> His looks to ground, and half in scorn he smil'd;
> He saw at once earth, sea, flood, castle, town,
> Strangely divided, strangely all compil'd,
> And wonder'd folly man so far should drown.
> To set his heart on things so base and vilde,
> That servile empire searcheth, and dumb fame,
> And scorns Heav'n's bliss, yet proff'reth Heaven the same ‖."

In vain are all these public and private contrivances,

* Hugo de St. Vict. Eruditiones Theologicæ, tit. VII.
† De Doctrin. Christ. Lib. I. 38.
‡ Childe Harold, III.
§ De Repub. lib. IX. ‖ Book XIV. ii.

day by day, continually throughout the year, to repel, as Thucydides says, τὸ λυπηρόν*. "Born," says St. Gregory, "to the sorrows of this journey, we may indeed have arrived at that degree of fastidiousness as not even to know what we ought to desire†. But what is naturally wished by the human will, is justice, as Duns Scotus profoundly observes, for that is its perfection; since, as the inferior irrational nature has a principle of tending to that which naturally agrees with it, so the will has necessarily a principle of tending to justice, which is the end that agrees with its nature ‡. Hugo of St. Victor makes a curious remark to show how clearly the human heart discerns that it is made for higher than earthly joys. When speaking of the words of Ecclesiastes, that all things under the sun are vanity, he adds, "I know not wherefore, but these words when they are read sound sweet in our ears. We are glad to be told of our evils, and what we do not love we nevertheless love to hear, for we do not love our evils, and yet we love to hear of them. The reason must be, that by hearing of the evil which we do not love, we are reminded of the good which we love; and this remembrance of good, even amidst evils, is sweet to the mind, and so much the sweeter as the evils are more bitter, which when hearing or feeling we discern to be far removed from the good to which we aspire. So that when the sorrows of our exile are described and the extent of our misery declared, our mind awaking as if from a long sleep, suddenly remembers where it once was, and from a view of the mighty ruins, it calculates the height of the summit from which it fell. This is what renders lamentation so sweet to the miserable, and which converts their sighs and tears into such delicious food §."

The need, however, of a divine object appeared obvious, not only from a consideration of the dignity of our nature, but also from a sense of what was requisite to procure it so much of present happiness as was allowable in the world of wishes or innocent amidst the phantoms of sin and vanity. Did any one hope to satisfy his thirst from the broken cisterns of the world's joy? Phædra, in her sickness, was a symbol of the destiny which awaited him;

* Lib. II. 38. † Hom. in Ev. 36.
‡ Duns Scoti, lib. II. Sentent. Dist. XXXIX. 9. 1.
§ Annotationes Elucidatoriæ in Ecclesiast. Hom. II.

for of him it would soon be said with truth, you take pleasure in nothing; you change from one place to another; the present is displeasing, the absent is thought dearer.

οὐδέ σ' ἀρέσκει τὸ παρὸν, τὸ δ' ἀπὸν
φίλτερον ἡγεῖ *.

The reason of which calamity was remarked by Cicero, when he says, that lust can never find an end †. The ambitious, as Cardan remarks, are all inconstant ‡, for no one who thirsts for visible things can ever be satisfied; since, as Hugo of St. Victor says, "the whole world would not suffice to man, who is the lord of the world. The eye cannot be satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing §." "The world cries, I fail; the flesh cries, I corrupt; the demon cries, I deceive; Christ cries, I restore; and yet," adds St. Bernard, "such is the blindness and madness of our minds, that leaving Christ who invites us with loving words, we follow the failing world, the corrupting flesh, and the deceiving demon." "The more one drinks," says Richard of St. Victor, "the more one thirsts, for to satisfy the appetite of sensuality, the whole world would not suffice ||." Nor is it more able to satisfy any of those vague desires which are so powerful in men of acutely sensitive minds, and which attach them with such affection to the remembrance of their youth, to the days that were embalmed with friendship and with poesy. "There was a time too, when I could weep," cries Schiller; "O ye days of peace, thou castle of my father, ye green lovely valleys! O all ye Elysian scenes of my childhood! will ye never come again, never with your balmy sighing cool my burning bosom? Mourn with me nature! they will never come again, never cool my burning bosom with their balmy sighing—they are gone! gone! and may not return." Return, perhaps, he would not that they should, as the profound thinkers of the middle age would remark, though his words express that wish. Hugo of St. Victor felt this mystery of our heart. "O ancient time, where art thou?" he exclaims,

* Eurip. Hyppolyt. 185.
† Tuscul. v. 7.
‡ De Sapientia, Lib. III.
§ Instit. Monast. XXIX.
|| De præparatione animi ad contemplationem, cap. VI.

"formerly while thou existed I loved thee, and now when thou hast ceased to exist, I love thee still; nor can thy departure ever diminish my love for thee. While present I loved thee that thou mightest remain, and now that thou art no more I love thee, and yet I do not wish that thou shouldst return to me. Marvellous desire, incomprehensible affection. What can I love in thee if I am unwilling that thou shouldst exist, unwilling that thou shouldst return? What is that unheard of affection when a thing is loved, and yet its presence is not loved? Who will explain to me this love of my heart? The reason why I will not that thou shouldst return again is this, that I desire rather to be with thee where thou art now. Formerly I loved thee perversely, when I wished thee to remain with me where I was in exile, and now I love thee with more consideration, because I wish to be with thee in our country, where thou wilt subsist for ever *." The experience of ages has demonstrated that without a view to the final consummation of all perfection in the reign of everlasting justice, men are sure to find nothing on their pilgrimage but disappointment, and without faith, despair. "Oblivion on this earth," cries a poet of France in a passage of unmingled bitterness, composed a few days before his death, "Oblivion on this earth, and beyond it. Behold, friend, my life and my eternity! Oblivion, for I have passed without leaving a trace! Oblivion! for how little place demands my grave! Poor, unknown, without a destiny, lost in the crowd, atom cast upon the vulgar wave, like every other mortal that floats with us, I have gathered and borne my crown of thorns, and beyond that nothing †." Behold the end of man's distempered thirst.

——————— "O blind lust!
O foolish wrath! who so dost goad us on
In the brief life, and in the eternal then
Thus miserably o'erwhelm us ‡."

It is an error to suppose that these melancholy views of the natural life date from a recent epoch. Cardan, who never heard the modern strains, remarks "that in youth, when all things flourish, strength, senses, beauty, and

* De Vanitate Mundi, Lib. II. † Brugnot.
‡ Dante, Hell, XII.

genius, not unfrequently we feel life wearisome*." All that is not God is nothing. Hence the certain disappointment which awaits our vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires; for "the hopes of men" as Pindar says, "are tossed up and down upon a sea of error†." Not the highest, firmest seats of earthly grandeur can give them rest. Otho the third emperor, was openly joyous, but on account of the warning of blessed Heribert, he secretly groaned and wept‡. Excepting the thirst for justice or the ardent desire of pleasing God, there is no movement of the soul which can be trusted without deliberation. "Noli inniti prudentiæ tuæ," says Solomon, "for," adds Richard of St. Victor, "man knows not what may conduce to good in this life, in the number of the days of his peregrination, and in the time which passes away as a shadow §." Yes, it was well understood in the ages of faith that we need a divine object; that all else is mutable in man. "God alone," says a French historian, "can rejoice over his work, and say that it is good. When man has toiled and conquered, he lets fall from his hands the long desired object, disgusted with it and with himself. Thus Alexander died of sadness, when he had conquered Asia, and Alaric when he had taken Rome. Godefroy of Bouillon had no sooner possession of the Holy Land than he sat discouraged on the earth, and languished for rest within its bosom." Genius has no privilege here, for its most adored creation is sure to crumble into dust as soon as perfected. St. Augustin calls the image which we represent to ourselves in conceiving any object "the son of our heart ||". These sons die before us. To have this illustrated, you need only hear Schiller speaking of his Don Carlos, and accounting for its irregularity. "Some time elapsed," says he, "between beginning and concluding it; I commenced the fourth and fifth acts with quite an altered heart." Little strange should it seem that the struggles of individual unassisted genius prove insufficient, when even the sublimest works of religious art in ages of faith, indicate that they had not satisfied their authors. The gentle breath of that spirit which

* Hieron. Cardani de Consolatione, Lib. II.
† Olymp. car. XII. ‡ Drexelii aurifodina.
§ De statu interioris hominis, Lib. I. c. 24.
|| De Trinitate, Lib. XI.

passed before the face of Daniel, carrying away kingdoms and breaking empires—that spirit which animated the artists of the middle age, which enabled them to raise those mountains of vaults and towers into the air by giving them a force greater than the arms of Titans; that spirit, let it work what it will, is always ill at ease in its dwelling. It can extend, and vary, and adorn it, but it can not rest in it. "See these admirable cathedrals," continues Michelet, "however beautiful they may be, with their towers and their saints in glories, they cannot contain it. Around the church we must build little churches; it must radiate with chapels. Beyond the altar we must raise an altar, a sanctuary behind the sanctuary." Experience and reflection had convinced philosophers of this impossibility of satisfying the thirst of the soul with anything human, and hence it is, that, as Novalis remarks *, "every science had its god, which was its end. Mechanics lived upon the perpetual motion, and their highest aim was the construction of a perpetuum mobile. So also chemistry had its menstruum universale, or its philosopher's stone. Philosophy sought a first principle; mathematical, the quadrature of the circle; medical, a life elixir; political, a perfect freedom with government. The philosophers of the middle age all sought the unlimited, though they found only what is limited. They sought infinity, though they found only things."

Ardent minds, endowed with the faculty of extending the field of positive knowledge, would never in those spiritual ages have devoted themselves to dry studies if the imagination had not proposed a mysterious end as the desired result of their labours. Raymond Lully, Albert, Picus of Mirandola, Cardan, and others of that type, had all a nobler though less practical object in view than what is generally ascribed to them, ideal and often fantastical it is true, but still the secret fire which instigated them to such prodigious labours.

But this disappointment was the punishment of pride, methinks I hear some one reply. In the mere research or discovery of natural truth, these men would have found that rest and satisfaction which would have filled the vacuum of their hearts. Vain pretension of modern philosophers, which the weakest can see through; for if he

* Schriften, II. 231.

who should say that he had opened certain great fountains which had been concealed, were to say this, at the same time exhibiting every indication of thirst, would it not be ridiculous? And is it not absurd when these men who affirm that they are not only the lords of fountains, but that they are themselves fountains, and able to irrigate the minds of all, while they promise this to others, are themselves parched up with thirst *?

The great masters of the spiritual life discovered that it was the absence or presence of the thirst after justice which caused sadness or joy. "Si quis mundum omnino odit," says St. John Climacus, "hic tristitiam effugit. Porro, si quis qualibet visibilium rerum affectione mordetur, tristitia nondum liberatus est †." They saw that in fact men were constantly committing the double error of Narcissus and its opposite, concluding that a substance is a shadow, as often as they mistook a shadow for a substance. To privation all men are doomed on this earth, but those are least wretched who are pitied most; for it is not an imaginary good as many suppose to have one's affections centered upon a heavenly end, nor is it a substantial felicity to have reaped the shadows of human kindness which pass like the wind upon the rocks of the desert.

Goethe represents Tasso thirsting with all the ardour of a youthful and poetic genius for the friendship of Antonio, and we think him deserving of pity, because the latter meets his advances with the formality, and coldness and distrust of one who makes the world his friend; but had he found a heart of other mould, and sought it so, there would have only been a postponement of the bitter hour. Happy the man who learneth not by experience, when it is too late, the folly of placing confidence in the stability of creatures, or in any thing but in the very root and substance of justice. Are you labouring for the glory which Pindar promises to the conqueror, saying,

———— μέγα τὶ κλέος αἰεὶ
ᾧ τινι σὸν γέρας ἔσπετ' ἀγλαόν ‡?

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* Cicero ad Herennium, Lib. IV. 6.
† Scala Paradisi Grad. II.
‡ Olymp. VIII.

Do you expect happiness in the friendship of those who are not associated in the privileges of eternal good? You are sowing the wind, you are embracing a shadow, "quia citius oblviscentur tui homines, quam æstimas." What profound scars does misfortune, and often too that which is called by fools prosperity, leave in the soul! How quickly it uproots from a heart that is not Christian, all hope, and all poesy! How soon one arrives with the evil genius of France at seeing in the life of nations as in that of individuals, a cold pleasantry of fate! "Before the fall, man was full, because God was his centre; but," continues Baader, "after it he became internally void, God ceased to be his centre, and instead of filling him internally, compressed him from without, and hence being unable to sustain himself, he falls with a weight upon some thing external, in order to be sustained." While thus placed he has but one alternative, to be wretched, seeking happiness in the love of creatures, or to be desiring and hoping, looking towards that primal seat, "ubi pulchritudo est et satietas æterna," and praying in words like those with which Dante addresses the blessed spirits:—

> ——— "O perennial flowers
> Of gladness everlasting, that exhale
> In single breath your odours manifold;
> Breathe now; and let the hunger be appeased,
> That with great craving long hath held my soul,
> Finding no food on earth *."

It is when brought to this state, that according to the writers of the middle age, the Father draws a man to Christ: "for," says the author of Theologia Germanica, "when any thing of this perfect good is uncovered and manifested to the soul, as if in a moment there arises in that man a desire of approaching to this perfect good, and of uniting himself to it. The greater is this desire, the more is revealed to him, the more he thirsts, the more he is satisfied, and the more there is revealed to him, the more he desires and is drawn. Thus man is drawn to a conjunction with the eternal good, and this is the drawing of the Father †." This was the direction given to

* Parad XIX. † Cap. 54.

the human intelligence during the supernatural ages of which I am attempting the history. It was accurately ascertained that the thirst of men was not for any secondary stream, but for the great original Source of justice. "At the banquet of God," says Hugo of St. Victor, "there is but one dish, but despise it not, for it satiates. Many things are in the world, and none of them can fill man's heart, but there is one good with God, and when this is found, all is found. 'Ergo non in multitudine, sed in unitate satietas est *.'" The cry of the middle ages was that of the prophet, "Mihi autem adhærere Deo, bonum est," interpreted according to the comment of St. Augustin. "Many were the opinions of philosophers respecting the chief good; but he does not say, for me to have riches is good, or to have a crown and sceptre is good, or what some of them did not blush to say, for me to have sensual pleasure is good, or what sounds better, for me to have virtue is good, but for me to adhere to God, is good; this, therefore, is the chief good of man †."

CHAPTER II.

That such was the thirst of men during ages of faith, will appear more clearly as we proceed to inquire in what manner it developed itself, and what were its effects; for in truth, the whole life of man, the whole constitution of society, notwithstanding all its defects and abuses, was a continued display and evidence of its power. Who sees not that this was the thirst which imparted that theocratic character to the nations of Europe which induces philosophers like Vico to designate this period by the title of a divine and heroic age? Who does not discern that it was this thirst which moved men to cover the

* Annot. in Cœlest. Hierarch.
† De Civitate Dei, Lib. X. 18.

earth with so many noble monuments of piety, so many institutions of mercy; which rendered the whole life of so many great artists devoted to the honour and service of the Catholic Church, a kind of continual fever; which made men legislate for heaven rather than for earth, for the celestial rather than for the human republic; which drew some from the arid desert of the world to seek the living waters in the paradise of cloistered shades, and others to devote their bodies as witnesses for justice amidst the profane city; that this was the thirst which made the true, devoted pilgrim pursue his way, so wearisome and long, undaunted, and firm, in his fixed resolve to measure kingdoms with his feeble steps? What else was it but this thirst which drew a St. Dorothea from Danzig to Agen, to venerate its holy relics, and to visit the hermit in the dark wood adjacent, for whose little chapel thrice she left her home, and made that long journey of desire in time of war, when robbers infested all the ways, from whose barbarous hands she suffered griefs unnumbered? What other cause impelled her afterwards to traverse Germany and Italy, to visit Rome for the jubilee, with such ardour, that during the whole pilgrimage, it is said, she slept but one night, which was the second after arriving in the holy city? Was it not also this thirst which gave rise to the interminable toils of Christian knighthood, and to all the wondrous and acute provisions which were prescribed for ministering to the wants of human society? But that our path through this thick wood may not seem retrograde or endless, let us take some one object of unquestioned interest as the scope of our enterprise, that by the complete survey of it we may have a swift, delightful, as well as an instructive way, in exposing the admirable manifestation of this divine thirst.

In the school before our last, we had occasion to unfold the history of churches, with all that related to their origin, construction, and adornment. We have seen with what truth the divine words may be applied to them, they were made by God. "Since," as St. Augustin says, "from him is every perfect gift, and that to construct those houses of prayer, he visited the minds of his faithful, excited their affections, supplied assistance, inspired their wills that they should will, assisted the efforts of their good will that they should accomplish, so

that it was God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, that began and perfected all these things *." The present has appeared the proper place for resuming, as it were, that story, and for considering the holy offices which were celebrated within these divinely constructed walls, and the various festivals which pious devotion commemorated there; for the voice of the Church was the language of desire, and the expression of that thirst which is assuaged only by justice, only by beholding the face of Him uncovered who is seen veiled upon the altar, who is himself in infinite perfection, justice, and truth; and if the historian of France can justly affirm that material monuments, such as the cathedrals of Paris and Rheims, are great historical facts which speak more than long narrations, surely it will not be irrelevant to the enterprise of those who seek information respecting the intimate sentiments of the middle age, to inquire what was the purpose to which these were applied, what was the spirit within that marvellous symbolism which astonishes by its vastness and soothes by its peerless beauty?

To minds thoroughly imbued with a sense of justice, the world even in that age of Christian institutions presented a chaos. The soul of man aspired to order, and it hoped to find it in the symbolic ceremonies of faith. In the Church alone was the intelligence of man, his true life, and his rest. The constant love with which the divine offices were celebrated during the middle ages, can be referred to no other source but the disposition which is pronounced blessed from the mountain. It undoubtedly originated in a thirst for justice, a thirst for order, a thirst for the invisible supreme good of which all earthly forms of beauty were converted by it into symbols. Let us proceed, therefore, by first casting a glance at the history of their institution.

In the infancy of the Church immediately after the resurrection of our Lord, we find that his disciples were always in the temple praising and blessing God †. Philo Judæus wrote a book, "De Vita Christianorum," in which he describes how the Christians passed their time in public psalmody and hymns, keeping vigils during the

* St. August. Serm. 256 de Tempore.

† S. Luc. XXIV. 53.

night, and singing in praise of God, making stations at altars and joining in alternate chorus *. Lucian, the atheist, in one of his dialogues, laughs at the Christians for passing whole nights in singing hymns and vigils †. Pliny relates to Trajan that they used to assemble before light to sing hymns to Christ ‡, and Ammianus Marcellinus, another heathen writer, records the custom of the Christians passing the night in their churches. The offices of prime, tierce, sext, nones, vespers, and matins, are spoken of in the apostolic constitutions, and by St. Dionysius, the Areopagite §. Tertullian, in the beginning of the third century, describes the early congregation of the faithful before light, and expressly mentions the celebration of the third, sixth, ninth, and vesper hours. Origen in his third book on Job, alludes to their matins and vespers, and Clemens Alexandrinus in the ninth of the Stromata, commemorates tierce, sext, and nones, as does also St. Cyprian in his book "De Oratione Dominica." St. Zeno, in his first sermon to the Neophites, praises "the sweet vigils of the bright night," and Cæcilius with Minutius Felix, calumniates the nocturnal congregation of the Christians, calling them, "latebrosos et lucifugaces." In the same age, St. Hippolytus the Martyr, in a discourse on the end of the world, says, that one effect of the coming of antichrist will be the abolition of the psalmody and sacred rites of the Church. When St. Basil was detained in prison, some clerks and deacons gave money to the guards that they might gain entrance, in order to sing with him during the night the divine offices. This is related by John, the Priest, of Nicomedia. In the fourth century there are abundant testimonies, in Eusebius Cæsariensis, St. Athanasius, St. Basil, and St. Gregory Nazianzen. From these it appears that the psalm "Deus, Deus meus," and also that "Benedicite omnia opera," were then sung at matutinal lauds. The duty and happiness of this early thanksgiving are feelingly enforced by these great saints, who describe the solemn beauty of the nocturnal chorus. Palladius, speaking of the mountain of Nitria, on which five thousand monks lived in the

* Suidas in Vit. Philo. Euseb. Lib. II. c. 17.
† In Philopatre. ‡ Lib. X. c. 97.
§ Cardinal Bona, de divina Psalmodia, cap. 1. §. 4.

time of the great St. Anthony, says, "At the ninth hour, you might hear in each monastery the hymns and psalms sung to Christ, with prayers and lauds, so that you might suppose yourself passed into a paradise of joy*." St. Jerome and St. Chrysostom, explain the particular object of each hour's devotion. At the rising of the sun, it was to return thanks to God; at tierce, to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost at this hour; at sext, the fastening of Christ to the cross; at nones, his giving up the ghost; at the setting of the sun to thank God for the mercies of the past day: and then they enumerate the nocturnal vigils and matutinal lauds at the first crowing of the cock. St. Augustin, in numerous places, mentions the same offices, as does also Cassian in his description of the ecclesiastical and monastic life. Peter Chrysologus, Synescius, Victor Uticensis, and St. Cæsarius of Arles, are equally clear in describing the nocturnal vigils, and the daily offices; and holy men in dying used to instruct youths in the manner of observing them†. Nilus the Monk, relates that the holy fathers in Sina were killed by the barbarians at break of day, at the end of their matutinal hymns. In the sixth century, the most holy Benedict furnishes in his Rule an evidence of the fervour with which men studied the praise of God; and in the following age, his disciple Gregory the Great closes the evidence produced by Cardinal Bona, in the history of the divine psalmody. Then followed Isidore of Spain, Alcuin of England, Amalarius Fortunatus, Rabanus Maurus, Walfridus Strabo, Rupertus Abbas, Hugo de St. Victor, and others, who cultivated the exercise of the divine offices with the greatest fervour. Thus we discern the gross error of Polidorus Virgil, who supposes the institution of the sacred hours to have arisen in the time of Pelagius II., whereas Cardinal Bona has fully shown that they commenced with the infant Church. Palladius declares that he beheld a state in which there were more monasteries than profane houses, that the divine praises were sung in every spot, and that the whole city seemed to be one church‡. In Bythinia arose monasteries *ἀκοιμήτων*, in which the divine praises were

* Hist. Lauriaca, cap. 7.
† Metaph. Duty apud Surium. 12 Septembre.
‡ See Histor. Lauriaca.

unceasingly sung night and day. Nicephorus relates that one of these was built in Constantinople, in which an association of monks, divided into three choirs, maintained an unceasing psalmody. St. Columban, at Luxeuil, instituted a similar monastery, and St. Gregory of Tours mentions another at Agen. The same rule was observed in the Abbey of St. Denis, and in that of Tours, and in many houses of the Cistercian order. The minds of men ever rested upon that divine verse, "Beati qui habitant in domo tua, Domine; in sæcula sæculorum laudabunt te." Of the clergy of Paris, in the time of St. Germain, Fortunatus says,—

> "Carmine Davidico divina poëmata pangens
> Cursibus assiduis dulce revolvit opus."

The Cistercian monks always celebrated lauds at break of day, and, therefore, in the winter season, after singing nocturns, they always returned to their cells to spend the interval in study or prayer until the first break of light; but in the summer they sung lauds immediately after matins *. St. Ambrose furnishes evidence that in his time, people of all sorts came to matins on Sunday, men and women, youth and old people, only one or two remained at home to guard the house †. The sacred Scriptures every where record that just men in all ages observed the break of day to devote it to religion. "Dominus visitat hominem diluculo:" and he sends his prophets rising early ‡. Job, the mirror of justice, rising up early offered sacrifice for himself and his sons §, whom he charges to rise up early to God. The holy David meditates the secrets of God in the morning watch, and early in the morning offers praise to God. The just are then all united in sacrifice and prayer, and as Hugo Victorinus says, "There is nothing which Satan so much fears as the unity of charity." The morning is symbolical of piety. The ancient Etruscans offered honey to Aurora, which we consecrate with the sweetness of devotion. The poets represented Aurora as mounted

* Card. Bona, de divina Psalmodia, 142.
† S. Ambros. Serm. 34. de Tempore.
‡ Eccl. xxxix. 6. § Job vii. 18.

upon Pegasus, because the soul is then light to fly upon the wings of contemplation. Some thought it was called Aurora, from the golden colour of the sky. Taking occasion from this emblem, the writers of the middle age observe, that we ought to shine in the morning with the gold of charity, and, that as the poet Nævius speaks of blushing Aurora, so should the modest colour represent the grace of chaste purity in our souls. Homer calls the morning divine, because it brings us light, which is the symbol of the divinity. Therefore with the rising light, the children of divine light emulating the holy angels, who are called the morning stars, sing praises to the Author of light, and shine to him with joy *. St. Ambrose says, that even the example of the birds should admonish men to praise their Creator at the rise of morning, and to begin the day with the solemnity of psalms †. Celebrated, say the fathers, is the statue of Memnon, described by Philostratus and Callistratus, which of its own accord when first illumined by the golden rays of morning, used to emit a sweet and ravishing sound, an emblem which might remind men to adore the majesty of their Creator at the rising of the sun. Durantus Tholosanus says, that the hour of tierce used to be called the golden hour. In the canonical law, it is styled sacred, because it is at this hour that the sacred mass is celebrated with solemnity on days of high festival, as the ancient custom of the Church has ordained in order to commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost.

On the various parts of the divine offices let us now briefly dwell.

Photius says, that a hymn is so called, "quasi *ὑπόμνησις*," that is, a commemoration of something past. Eusebius speaks at length on the hymns which the Christians used to sing in the very infancy of the Church. The proses, or sequences, in which we trace the first beginning of the rhyme which distinguishes the modern from the ancient classic poetry ‡, are said to have been invented by Notker, a monk of St. Gall, in the year 880, whose version of the Psalms in German is still extant;

* Card. Bona, de divina Psalmod. 145.
† Exam. Lib. IV. c. 1.
‡ Pasquier Recherche de la France, Lib. VII.

but this monk affirms that he had seen the first model of them in a missal of the abbey of Jumièges, which was burned by the Normans in the middle of that century. The celebrated sequence, "Veni, Sancte Spiritus," is attributed to Hermann, or to Pope Innocent III. That of Dies Iræ is ascribed to Thomas Celanus, of the order of St. Francis, in the thirteenth century. Of the same order was Jacoponus, who in the fourteenth, composed the Stabat Mater. Peter of Compostella is supposed to have been the author of the Salve Regina and the Alma Redemtoris. The universal adoption of the Roman Breviary, which is acknowledged to have been the slow and successive product of time, experience, piety, and the study of the Scriptures, was one of the happy effects, resulting in the middle ages, from the power of the Holy See, aided by the zeal of the nations, and the desire of devout kings. "We should do all things that the Lord has ordained with order," says St. Clemens, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians. "He has wished that we should render him certain duties at certain hours; he has also determined certain places and certain persons, where and by whom his worship should be celebrated: he has assigned to the sovereign pontiff his functions, to priests the place where they should offer the sacrifice, and to the Levites all the detail of their ministry." It was not, however, possible, in the first ages, to prevent the introduction of some diversity of customs in the celebration of the Divine offices; but this was finally obviated by the express and positive enactment of the Church. "Conformity and unity in the things which relate to the glory of God, must always be preserved in the Catholic Church," says the Bull of Clement VIII. "being founded under one head, Christ our Lord, and subject to his vicar on earth. Especially must that uniformity be maintained for ever in the prayers, and by adhering to what is contained in the Roman Breviary, that in the Church diffused throughout the whole world, God may be always praised and invocated by the faithful of Christ, in one and the same order of prayers and song*." Walafrid Strabo, who lived under Louis-le-Debonnaire, attests, that in almost all the Churches of the Latins, the customs, ritual, and liturgy

* Bullarium, Clemens VIII. Bulla, Cum in Ecclesia.

of Rome prevailed, on account of the privilege of the Roman See, and the wisdom of its practices." He wrote thus at a period long before the Church had made a law to enforce this uniformity; which proves the Catholic tendency which, in all times and in all things, obliges every Church to gravitate towards Rome.

Any departure, however slight, or capable of defence, from the general practice of the Church, was felt as an injury by holy men. St. Bernard supplied an instance, on his first arrival at Paraclet, which he reached as they were sounding the bell for vespers. He went, therefore, straight into the church; but he was shocked on hearing the superior, when repeating aloud the paternoster, use the word panem superstantialem, instead of quotidianum. This sounded ill in his ears as a novelty. When he came to speak to Heloisa respecting it, she proceeded indeed, with the utmost modesty and grace, to prove, by Greek and Hebrew, by Scripture and the Fathers, that this was the proper reading. Abeillard too, hearing of what had passed, wrote a learned letter to St. Bernard, in which he shows that St. Matthew, who gives the whole prayer, and who had heard it from Jesus Christ, uses this word; whereas St. Luke only gives a part of it, and he had only heard it from St. Paul. Moreover he showed that the Greek Church follows in this point St. Matthew, who wrote in Hebrew, in preference to St. Luke, though he wrote in Greek. Notwithstanding these arguments, St. Bernard adhered to his first opinion, that it would have been better to have followed the common universal usage of the Church.

Charlemagne lent his assistance to carry into effect the great object of the ecclesiastical rulers, to maintain one universal liturgy among the nations of Christendom:—"Ut non esset dispar ordo psallendi, quibus erat compar ardor credendi:"—that those who were united by the sacred reading of one holy law, might be united also in the venerable tradition of intonation; and that the different celebrations of offices might not separate those whom the pious devotion of one faith had joined together*. When therefore Spain, in the eleventh century, abandoned its Mozarabic ritual to embrace that of Rome, that

* Caroli Magni contra Synod. Græcor. de Imaginib. Lib. I.

grand system of universality, which gave such an inspiring authority to the ritual of the Catholic Church, received its full and final development. So early indeed as in the ninth century, Walafrid Strabo regarded this work as nearly terminated, and he demonstrated its advantages and indispensable necessity by the same arguments as those used by theologians of modern times *. The Council of Trent, in its twenty-fifth session, referred to the care of the Roman Pontiff the great work of the correction and definitive publication of the Breviary and Missal. Thanks to this master-piece of religious wisdom, the Catholic was a stranger in no land. Wherever he travelled, he heard the children of the Church sing the same holy chants of Rome—the mother and mistress of Christians—and the sublime tones which rose around the cross of the desert, were the same as filled the domes of the metropolis of the Christian world.

It need hardly be remarked, that although the final adoption of a uniform course of psalmody and reading was the gradual work of time, the more awful mysteries which involved the divine fulfilment of the ancient prophecy, were in all ages, and throughout the whole world, substantially the same. The word Missa, or Mass, though, like the term Trinity, not in Scripture, is of great antiquity, and, at least in the fourth century, it was used to designate the unbloody sacrifice of the altar, as appears from St. Ambrose † and St. Augustin ‡.

The Greek word λειτουργέω, which is derived from a word signifying public, is never used by St. Luke excepting in the sense of sacrifice, as is proved from his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. In the classic poets it is used to express any public function §; and in Scripture it nowhere signifies prayer. The function, or ministry, which by this term the Apostles are said to have discharged, was therefore that of the eucharistic sacrifice. The canon of the mass has received indeed some alterations since the times of the Apostles; for in the year 440, the great St. Leo added four words to it; and about the year 590, Pope St. Gregory some few others; but

* De Rebus Ecclesiastic. c. 25.
† In Epist. ad Marcellin. Soror.
‡ Serm. XCI. de Tempore.
§ Æschyl. Eumenid. 363.

nothing was changed without the greatest precautions. Thus, not one saint is named who was not dead a long time before the year 400; after which, nothing almost was added. The Apostles are named in an order different from the present, which dates from the time of St. Jerome, who named them as they are now generally placed, which is another remarkable evidence of the antiquity of the ritual. Indeed, the smallest ceremonies pertaining to it may be traced to the most remote period, as in the instance recorded by St. Jerome, who says, that "in all the churches throughout the East, when the Gospel is read, there are lights burning, though the sun may shine at the time *." We know that, in the second century, in the time of St. Evaristus, it was the custom to keep holy water even in private houses; in which, during the first ages, were practised all those devotional exercises of Christian worship, which had connexion with art and symbolism †: and in short, as a late writer observes, "we can trace, through every part of the office, some doctrine or observance of the primitive times, and may admire the watchful fidelity with which tradition has handed down every little ceremony connected with the first ages of our faith."

Leaving, therefore, the historical question, let us proceed to consider the ecclesiastical offices in relation to our threefold faculty of perception, as constituted for estimating beauty, justice, and truth—the development of which, certain philosophers of late have attempted to express by the term æsthetics; perhaps, indeed, without having sufficiently examined whether the particular combination of ideas really existed, for which they sought to discover a scientific word.

Ere we advance, however, it will be well to examine whether there be any ground of justice in the accusation so commonly brought against the middle ages, as expressed by Milton, who affirms, that "during their course the far greater part of men deemed in outward rites and specious forms religion satisfied, and that works of faith were rarely found." A sentence evidently expressing the conviction of many whom we still behold entering our churches, and with gloom beholding the rites that sanctify

* Advers. Vigilant.

† Rheinwald die Kirchliche Archæologie, 395.

the pile, darting at the altar and the vested priest looks of such suspicion, that one might conclude they were imbued with the opinion of Cecilius the philosopher, mentioned by Minutius Felix, who says that the Christians in their assemblies lick the blood of a slain child covered with flour, and distribute its limbs. For the present it will be sufficient to hear the unpremeditated testimony of the men accused: for if their adversaries refuse such evidence, and continue to ascribe opinions to them which they disowned with every expression of abhorrence, ignorance will be no cloak to malice.

Lewis of Granada, then, that eloquent Spanish friar, expressly says, that "all the sacred ceremonies, and other external works of virtue, which are not the least part of Christian perfection, are commended chiefly on this account, that they greatly assist us to attain to internal beauty and elegance of mind—that is, to a fuller knowledge of the Divinity, to hope, to love, to fear, and veneration of the Divine Majesty *." Ceremony is derived from the ancient word cerus, signifying holy, which also gave rise to the Latin term for men of an exalted station, as if the primal wisdom discernible in the formation of languages, had chosen in this manner to indicate that superior sanctity ought to be their characteristic. "In no name of religion," says St. Augustin, "can men be collected, unless the bond of certain signs, as if of visible sacraments, should unite them together †:" from which Duns Scotus would infer, that even under the law of nature there must have been ceremonies divinely instituted ‡; for though they are nothing in themselves, they are yet acts of exterior religion, by which the mind is excited to the veneration of holy things, and elevated to heavenly objects; and by them piety is nourished, charity enkindled, faith increased, the worship of God adorned, and religion maintained. The simple are thus instructed, and the true faithful kept distinct from false Christians.—Christ himself hardly ever performed a miracle without using some ceremony, as when he made damp clay, and stretched out his hand to touch, and wrote upon the ground. The body should pay its homage as well as

* Ludovic. Granatensis de Omnibus Sanctis, Concio II.

† Cont. Faustum. Lib. XIX. c. 11.

‡ In Lib. IV. Sent. Dist. I. 9. 7.

the soul. "Cor meum et caro mea exultaverunt in Deum vivum *." Under the three elements of religion, we find doctrinal learning rather than knowledge, the religion of the heart, as a thing of customary expression, and the symbolic religion of worship; which last remains the peculiarly positive religious object, and as Fries observes, "the most important in the formation of the popular life; for certainly positive religion is the most living and powerful master and instructor of the people, their perception and emotions arising from the view of the world constituting their deepest and strongest idea †."

But the clergy were most careful, as Cardinal Bona shows, to teach the people that piety did not consist in any exterior observances, though these were wisely and holily ordained by the Fathers ‡. The Catholic Church abhors that superstitious belief in the theurgical power of ceremonies, and in their meriting an eternal recompence, which some late writers ascribe to her; but she knew, as the author of Theologia Germanica says, that "by means of these rites and institutions many men are enticed, and converted to truth, who otherwise could not be corrected; and indeed, that few men come to truth who did not first receive these institutions and rites, and exercise themselves in them, while they knew nothing else. Therefore laws, precepts, institutions, and rites, in submissive spirituality or in spiritual poverty, are never despised or condemned, any more than the men who use them, who otherwise would become more inordinate, and worse than dogs or other brutes §."

The extraordinary, and to many, unaccountable stupidity of the peasants, in countries from which the ceremonies of faith have been withdrawn, is only the natural consequence of their having been deprived of the religious worship, and the exercises of prayer and meditation connected with it. It is religion acting through this medium which civilizes and spiritualizes men. These poor creatures grow up without any idea excepting what is suggested by mere natural and animal wants. "Experience teaches us," says La Hogue, "that by far the greatest portion of men can have no doctrine and pre-

* Psalm lxxxiii.
† Religios Philosophie, 177.
‡ De divina Psal. 499. § Cap. 24.

cepts of manners, unless by means of the public worship of religion: so that whenever the sacred rites which used to be publicly and solemnly celebrated are intermitted or abolished, it follows of necessity, that the rustic multitude and the unlearned people should relapse into the most foul barbarism, and into the most supine ignorance of the duties of nature and of society *." What some men call Apostolic simplicity, is more acutely noted down by others as Calvinistical folly. In our age, that Protestant simplicity of which some writers speak in admiration, is only a philosophic term for getting rid of God without forfeiting appearances; far more designed for excluding his image from appearing intellectually in the detail of life, than for banishing it in form and symbol from those cold temples, in which no hallowed flame ascends, and where sanctity at one entrance is quite shut out The heart of man knows of no such simplicity. If it loves God, it must love to refer all things to him, and to worship him with all the beauty of holiness, in spirit and in truth. The sophists who now babble most in praise of simplicity in public worship, are men who seem to think it a great thing if they profess a mere belief in the existence of a God as a sublime abstraction: and as for those who admire it on religious grounds, if they were to study the work of Cardinal Bona on the Discernment of Spirits, methinks they would find other matter for their thoughts besides the danger to which Catholics are exposed of mistaking the operations of nature or of Satan for those of grace †. In fact, as theologians observe, "External is the natural and necessary appendix to internal worship; for we are so constituted by nature, that all the sentiments of our soul break forth to the exterior, and become painted in the demeanour of the whole body; insomuch, that it is scarcely possible to love God sincerely with all the heart, and not break forth in his praise, and manifest the intimate sense of divine charity by external signs. Why do men love ceremony in religion? It is because they wish to enjoy life in all the faculties and divisions of their nature. To live is to be happy: and the highest life is that which is spiritual or divine. Therefore we desire that in that life all our per-

* Tractatus de Religione, cap. 11, prop. 2.

† De Discretione Spirituum, cap. 12.

ceptions should participate, and consequently we wish that our senses, as well as our reason, should be excited by a divine object. Even the disposition of body in relation to things external, resulting from a habit of devotion, instead of being a scandal to a profound thinker, may only remind him of what Malebranche says, "that every thing which passes mechanically within us, is worthy of the wisdom of our Maker *." Besides, man being constituted of a body and a soul, it is just that the body, with its various abilities, which are so many gifts of God, should come forward on the side of religion.—Further, it is the nature of man to need external assistance to enable him to rise to the meditation of divine things: therefore internal piety requires to be excited and nourished by ceremonies, and certain sensible signs. Moreover, every man ought to be religious and pious, not only so as to be conscious within himself that he worships God, but also that he should promote the piety and instruction of the men with whom he lives, and of those who are entrusted to his care; and this cannot be done unless we profess, by some external sign, the intimate sense of religion with which we are animated †.

In the ceremonial and discipline of the Church, there was no part without its use. That which might seem the most trifling, had its proper object, and served, in some way or other, to promote habits of humility, order, patience, recollection, and religion, so as to build up the Catholic character. Hence, the Fathers of the Council of Trent pronounce an anathema against all who should say, that the received and approved rites of the Catholic Church may be despised or omitted, "ad libitum," by the priests, or may be changed by any pastor of the churches ‡. A most important and incalculably beneficial sentence—which delivers Catholic piety from being at the mercy of weak, ignorant, though perhaps well-meaning men, who, in proportion to their weakness and ignorance, are generally vain of being reformers or modifiers of ancient things.

These approved ceremonies of the Church are called, by Hugo de St. Victor, Sacraments of Devotion. He

* Recherche de la Verité, Lib. V.
† De la Hogue Tractat. de Religione, cap. 2, prop. 1.
‡ Sess. VII. Can. 13.

divides them into three classes—the first consisting in things, such as the aspersion of water, the reception of ashes, the benediction of palms and tapers; the second in actions, as the sign of the cross, the exsufflations, the extension of hands, genuflexions; and the third in words, as the invocation of the blessed Trinity, and that of Deus in adjutorium—for words themselves are sometimes sacraments *.

There would be no end of following theologians in remarking all the uses of these external rites to imprint the mysteries of our faith on the understanding. They show that, from the exorcisms and insufflations used in baptism, it was easier to understand than the unlearned would have found it from the Scriptures, that children are born under the yoke of the demon, and infected with original sin: that, in like manner, the ashes strewed on the heads of men at the beginning of Lent, teach them, in a most forcible manner, the vanity of all earthly things, and that, in holy week, the solemn ceremonies of the Church recall and imprint a knowledge of the mysteries of human redemption. Certain it is that the Catholic ceremonies, besides answering these ends, conduce, in all ages, to the defence of the faith against innovaters, as when St. Augustin drew an invincible argument from the use of exorcisms in baptism against the error of the Pelagians †.

We are told incessantly, with shouts of defiance, that the rites of the Catholic Church addressed themselves to the imagination; as if, in the estimation of sound philosophy, it were an egregious offence to address the imagination, which is one of the powers of the soul, given to vivify and govern the interior man. But will not reason admit, that those persons ought chiefly to be protected who are chiefly in danger? And who are so much exposed to the wiles of the ancient enemy as persons to whose minds the greatest variety of images are continually presenting themselves? Who so liable to sundry distractions and temptations, against purity, against charity, against faith? Who so likely to be terrified at the approach of death, and recalled to the world by images

* Hugo de St. Victor, Eruditiones Theologicæ de Sacramentis, Lib. II. pars ix. 1.

† De la Hogue de Sacramentis in Genere, cap. 7, prop. 2.

of flesh and blood, by the wretched phantoms of vanity and sin? Assuredly it is a greater marvel to see a man of much imagination hold fast his faith, than to see it kept by one who is more under the controul of unimpassioned and abstract reason.

As for the charge of captivating the understanding by means of ceremonies, the men who produce it should learn from Malebranche, that their senses are not so corrupted as they imagine, but that it is the more interior part of their soul, their liberty, which is corrupted; that it is not their senses which deceive them, but that it is their will which deceives them by its rash judgments *. If, however, the church had ordained her ceremonies with a sole view to gratify the imagination, there might be some grounds for censure, even in reference to the beauties of poetry and art: because, although, in every excitement to spiritual activity, there is indeed a kind of pleasure, still emotion, as such, is not beautiful; but these rites are addressed not alone to the imagination; they are no less so to the affections and to the understanding of the instructed people. Can one suppose that no permanent moral change was wrought in the mind by the mere act of slowly and deliberately tracing the sign of the cross on the forehead, on the lips, and on the heart, when the gospel is announced in the divine mysteries? Can one suppose that the man accustomed to this practice is as likely to blush at the cross in society, and to show vile submission to worldly respect, as another who knows of no such practice? At the end of each lesson in the choral office, the reader turns to the altar saying, Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis, because, as holy writers say, even that work of reading cannot be without some fault, since, if he read well, the mind is tempted with elation, and if ill, confusion follows; therefore, he who reads, stands always in need of the mercy of God, lest a work, in itself good, should be either corrupted by pride or rendered ineffectual by false shame †. Can it be thought that to one instructed in this meaning, the mere ceremony does not incline him to humility, and warn him to beware how he hears as well as reads the divine word? And what, after all, are the first impressions created by the whole ritual?

* De la Recherche de la Verité, I.
† Bona, de divina Psalmodia, 389.

"Were I to enter one of their churches now," says a writer of the last century, "it would be apt to put me in mind of what St. John tells us he saw once in a vision. 'Another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the Angel's hand.' These lighted altars naturally made me think of what the good old Simeon said of Christ, 'A light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.'" Similar are the sentiments expressed by the celebrated Lavater on finding himself in a catholic church. "He doth not know thee, O Jesus Christ who dishonoureth even thy shadow? I honour all things," continues this philosopher, "where I find the intention of honouring thee. I will love them because of thee. I will love them provided I find the least thing which makes me remember thee! What then do I behold here? What do I hear in this place? Does nothing under these majestic vaults speak to me of thee? This cross, this golden image, is it not made for thy honour? The censer which waves round the priest, the gloria sung in choirs, the peaceful light of the perpetual lamp, these lighted tapers, all is done for thee! Why is the Host elevated, if it be not to honour thee, O Jesus Christ, who art dead for love of us, because it is no more, and thou art it, the believing church bends the knee. It is in thy honour alone that these children, early instructed, make the sign of the cross, that their tongues sing thy praise, and that they strike their breasts thrice with their little hands. It is for the love of thee, O Jesus Christ, that one kisses the spot which bears thy adorable blood; for thee, the child who serves, sounds the little bell, and does all that he does. The riches collected from distant countries, the magnificence of chasubles, all that has relation to thee. Why are the walls and the high altar of marble clothed with verdant tapestry on the day of the blessed sacrament? For whom do they make a road of flowers? For whom are these banners embroidered? When the Ave Maria sounds, is it not for thee? Matins, vespers, prime and nones, are they not consecrated to thee? These bells within a thousand towers, purchased with the gold of whole cities, do they

not bear thy image cast in the very mould? Is it not for thee that they send forth their solemn tone? It is under thy protection, O Jesus Christ, that every man places himself who loves solitude, chastity, and poverty. Without thee, the orders of St. Benedict and of St. Bernard would not have been founded. The cloister, the tonsure, the breviary, and the chaplet, render testimony of thee. O delightful rapture, Jesu Christ, for thy disciple to trace the marks of thy finger where the eyes of the world see them not! O joy ineffable for souls devoted to thee, to behold in caves and on rocks, in every crucifix placed upon hills and on the high ways, thy seal and that of thy love! Who will not rejoice in the honours of which thou art the object and the soul? Who will not shed tears in hearing the words, 'Jesus Christ be praised?' O the hypocrite who knoweth that name and answereth not with joy, amen. Who saith not with an intense transport, Jesus be blessed for eternity! for eternity*!"

Another famed objection to the rites and ceremonies of the Catholic church, was grounded on the supposed discovery that certain forms of expression adopted in them had been used by the ancients in their false religions; and this was proclaimed with a vociferation of exulting triumph by the very sophists who were themselves inclined to revive the spirit and doctrines of the heathen philosophy. Polydore Virgil seems to have been so pleased with what he had written on this point, that, although he continued to profess himself a Catholic, as to human eye, he really became one in heart at his death, yet, he looked on with the greatest apparent indifference while England was separating herself from the communion of the faithful. These men, so proudly learned, became fools, losing by pride what they gained by curiosity. To the profound thinkers of the ages of faith, there would have been nothing novel or startling in the proposition itself. Tertullian had shown that the ceremonies of the heathens, which resembled those of the Catholic church, had been transferred from the divine law to the worship of superstition †, and Gregory Nyssensis, and Theodoret had affirmed that even some may have been wisely borrowed from them by the holy Fathers, and employed to the worship of the true

* Empfindungen eines Protestantin in einerl Katholischen Kirche.

† De Præscript. cap. 40.

God *. The advantage of adopting and sanctifying some Pagan customs, was stated acutely in the following words by the venerable Bede. "Pertinaci Paganismo mutatione subventum est, quum rei in totum sublatio potius irritasset."

The conduct of the Church in adopting such ceremonies, was, in fact, only conformable to that of the Deity himself; for in his first covenant with Abraham he established circumcision as a most solemn and religious rite, yet this was in use among the heathens as a religious rite long before the time of Abraham, as is proved by Michaelis. To use the types or figures of a future Messiah in the Christian Church, would no doubt have been deemed inconsistent and monstrous, but it was impossible to infer that there was no one law, no one ceremony in the Jewish ritual, that the Christian Church could adopt. You have borrowed your ceremonies from the pagans, said the modern heathen, but one might have thought that the answer immediately sent forth would have left Middleton without any disciple bold enough to repeat his calumny †. Granting all that he would have granted, where could he find a prohibition in the law of Christians, from sanctifying every thing by prayer? While, on the other hand, with what victorious power might not the followers of Christian antiquity have advanced on their side, and proved that the very men who thus accused them were themselves guilty of having borrowed, not the ceremonies, which of themselves were nothing in the world, but the very spirit, sentiments, and language of the pagans? For let us consider how stood the two divisions of men opposed under these banners? The one were possessed of doctrines and manners perfectly unlike those of the ancient world, though it is true, some of the early sages in availing themselves of the great primitive traditions of the human race, had said many things that seemed to express the beauty and wisdom of the Catholic philosophy; but in the others no eye could discern any opposition to the spirit and habits of the heathen lore. We can pass from the classic

* Greg. Nyss. in vita Thaumat. Theodoret. Lib. VIII. de Cur. Græc. Affect.

† A Popish Pagan, the fiction of a Protestant Heathen. London, 1743.

authors of antiquity, and even from the profane poets, to their great writers, without observing any sudden transition or change. Their moralists rise no higher than the flight of Cicero or Seneca. Their views of human character differ in no respect from the representations given by Euripides, Plautus or Terence. We find in none of their writers those sentiments and features which were peculiar to the Gospel, which rendered it in the eyes of Pliny and Tacitus, an execrable superstition. Certainly their adamantine authors, as they styled each other, would have given no offence had they appealed to the judgment of the forum or the Areopagus.

But now dismissing these unworthy objections as fitting only in the men who cherish them, let us proceed to contemplate in quiet meditation the beauty and wisdom of the solemn offices which were observed within the holy precincts of the Catholic Church; and if Xenophon saith truly, that there is nothing among men so useful and so beautiful as order *, well may admiration be awakened at the memory of them: planet-like in their movement, constant in their duration, universal in their observance, so that holy writers of the middle ages, like St. Columban, St. Boniface, and St. Gregory, of Tours, could apply no other epithet to them; but "that course divine."—universal, I say, and like the great operations of nature, extended over every part of the earth, for by means of the monastic institutions, these celestial sounds were as familiar to the desert as to the city; they were heard in the solemn depth of forests, on the wildest mountain pass, and they were borne by howling winds, from rock to rock, along with the shriek of sea-birds over the ocean wave.

Nature herself seems to point out the distinction of hours. The Pythagoreans used to take morning walks alone in places of silence and repose, where were temples and groves, and other objects proper for acting upon the mind. They would not speak to any one until they had composed their minds rightly in solitude and contemplation; for they esteemed it a turbulent thing to go amongst the crowd immediately after rising from sleep. Therefore, they always observed this matutinal walk, especially in temples where they could be found, or if

* Œconom. cap. 8.

not, in such places as most nearly resembled them. In the evening they used to resume their walk, not alone, but two or three together, that they might repeat what they had learned in the day, and recall what they had done, and so exercise their memory *.

Chrysippus with Seneca says, that the Hours are sisters of the Graces, but elder in birth. Homer, in his hymns, calls the Hours wise, and Orpheus styled them chaste, and beautiful, and innocent. These expressions in their application are unintelligible to one who has only in mind a mode of employing the hours, like that of the degenerate times described by Martial, which consists in devoting the first to salutations and compliments, the middle to litigation, to business of various kinds, or to entertainment, and the last to banqueting and repose †; but in what justice do they seem founded to the Christian ear when remembrance suggests their employment by the Church and by Catholic men in ages of faith! Good men and holy might sometimes be dismayed at observing that they occasionally felt wearied internally even by the operation of the works of God, if they had not been accustomed to receive and remark with deep attention the counsels and encouragements of the Church, to whose offices we are in general far from sufficiently applying for a solution to difficulties in the study of philosophy. The love of variety, arising from a sense of our own infinity, which implies constant renovation, and development, is not a vain or criminal propensity, since it is part of our nature which God hath made; and the Holy Ghost foreseeing that the spectacle and course of the external world might occasionally prove wearisome to human minds, prompted the Church to add in grateful praise of the eternal Founder of things who ruleth night and day, those remarkable lines:

> "Et temporum das tempora,
> Ut alleves fastidium."

St. Athanasius observes, that from the creation of the world until Christ, the day preceded the night as we read in Scripture; but from the coming of Christ, the night

* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 21.
† Lib. IV. Epig. 8.

precedes the day; and thus we begin to celebrate the day solemnly from the vespers of the preceding day. This was typical to show how from light men were to decline to darkness, from God to errors and idolatry; but from the time that the sun of justice, Christ, rose upon us, we are brought out of darkness into the light of divine faith *. The monks of Mount Athos consider the day to begin from midnight, because it was then that the resurrection of our Lord took place; and in allusion to this the Church exclaims, "O vere beata nox quæ sola meruit scire tempus et horam, in qua Christus ab inferis resurrexit," as if even the very time itself were endowed with intelligence, and more than in poetic figure blessed. The holy Fathers are full of praises of the night generally. The night, say they, is innocent, though it is the time of committing crimes, for the mind ought to be accused, not the time. St. Jerome says, "it is good to meditate during the day, but nocturnal meditation is still better; for in the day various necessities interpose, and cares and occupations distract the mind, but the night is the time of peace and quietness, most favourable for prayer and watching †." Therefore, St. Chrysostom says, "the night is not made for us to pass the whole of it in sleeping and repose. Witness these workmen, these sailors, and merchants. The Church of God rises at midnight. Rise, thou, also, and observe the choir of the stars, the profound silence, the great quiet, which of itself can charm the passions of a troubled heart. Be amazed at the wonderful dispensation of thy God. Then the mind is purer, lighter, more subtle. This darkness and silence are enough to inspire it with compunction; but if you behold the heavens studded, as it were, with innumerable eyes, you will take delight in admiring the wisdom of the Creator. God is moved by nocturnal prayers, if you make the time of repose that of penitence ‡." Speaking of the constant prayer and psalmody of the perfect Christian, Clemens Alexandrinus adds, "ἀλλὰ καὶ νύκτωρ εὐχαὶ πάλιν." "The day," says Tertullian, "dies in the night, and is buried in darkness. The honour of the world is shrouded, and all substance

* Athan. in 99, Sac. Script. 54. Gen. i. 3.
† Ep. 36, De Observ. Vigiliarum, Tom. IV.
‡ Hom. 26, in Act. Apost.

is enveloped in blackness. All things are silent and amazed. Every where are justice and rest. Thus nature mourns for the departed light*." St. Chrysostom, who had not foreseen what we now behold, in enumerating the beneficent works of God, takes especial notice of the merciful ordination of night to oblige men to suspend their labours who might otherwise be induced by avarice to deprive themselves of necessary repose. It is night, when the woods and the wild seas rest. "Behold," he exclaims, "what tranquillity, what profound silence. Every thing in nature is hushed, every thing is in repose, even beasts and monsters possess quiet in sleep's calm bliss: there is an end also of complaint, and of those groans which proceed from the miseries of human life. The night is like a favourable port in which all men forget the storms with which they were agitated during the day†." There is an end of the combats of ambition. The friendly night, as Æschylus sings, wide over heaven's star-spangled fields, holdeth her awful reign ‡, and even the intemperate passions of the heroic world professed submission to its sway.

νὺξ δ' ἤδη τελέθει· ἀγαθὸν καὶ νυκτὶ πιθέσθαι §.

"Fatigued by the labours of the day, is it not," asks St. Cyrill of Alexandria, "through favour of the night that we recover the vigour which we had lost? What is more favourable than the night to promote our advance in wisdom? It is the time of those holy thoughts which raise our souls towards the Author of all good; it is then that we can devote ourselves more freely to reading and to the meditations of the divine oracles. Is it not during the night that we find in our soul a greater ardour for prayer, and in our voice more religious sounds to chant the sacred canticles? At what time does the remembrance of our sins present itself to us with the greatest force? Is it not during the night?"

In the last book we remarked how familiar were men with death, and here we see in their language abound-

* Tertull. de Resur. Carnis, cap. 12.
† On Compunction, Lib. II. cap. 5.
‡ Agamem. § Hom. Il. VII. 282.

ing in solemn invocations, how they sympathised also with black night, the mother, not of the furies, but of peaceful and holy thoughts. "It seems to me," says Clemens of Alexandria, "that the night was called 'εὐφρόνη,' because at that time the soul is at rest from the senses, and partakes more of wisdom. On that account the mysteries are chiefly celebrated at night, and they signify the separation of the soul from the body *." Eustathius writing on the Iliad, cites the ancient proverb which ascribes counsel to the night, to which Æschylus seems to subscribe, saying, that during the day mortals are blind †. In the arrangement of the ecclesiastical office these considerations have not been overlooked, for in the office of the night we may observe, that the lessons read are longer than those read in the day; because, as Cardinal Bona says, the night is for contemplation, the day for action ‡. It appears from Tertullian, Athenagoras, Arnobius, Justin, and Minutius Felix, that the Christians were calumniated by the heathens on account of their nocturnal psalmody and vigils. They were called a people loving darkness, and addicted to impious rites. The Christians might, indeed, have referred them to their own poets, who speak of the sacred night §, to Orpheus, who celebrated the night in noble hymns, to Cicero, who praises the nightly vigil consecrated to the gods ||, to Plato, who recommends the employing part of the night in transacting public business, and the affairs of domestic economy, for the reason that much sleep is injurious to the concerns of both body and soul ¶. But the examples of the Old Testament supplied them with a sufficient authority, for there they read that Abraham rose up by night with his son to ascend the mountain and obey the voice of God; that it was by night when Jacob desired to see the mysterious ladder, and struggling with the angel till morning, received a benediction; that by night the Lord led the children of Israel out of Egypt; that Samuel the prophet prayed all night to the Lord; that Judith went out by night and prayed; that the royal David rose at midnight to confess to the Lord, and invited others to lift up their hands by night and to

* Stromat. Lib. IV. c. 22.
‡ De div. Psal.
|| De Legibus, Lib. II.
† Eumenid. 105.
§ Eurip. Ion. 85.
¶ Ib. Lib. VII.

bless the Lord. "The devotion of vigils," says Nicetius, "has always been known to the saints. Isaia cried, 'De nocte vigilat spiritus meus ad te, Deus.' David says, 'memor fui nocte nominis tui, Domine.' Anna, the widow, departed not from the temple day and night, the holy shepherds too were keeping watch when they beheld the vision of angels in the sky; and the Saviour himself repeatedly reminds us of the need of watching by night, and taught us by his example, and admonished Peter in the time of the passion, 'non potuistis una hora vigilare mecum? Vigilate et orate;' words sufficient to awaken men from the sleep of death. The blessed apostles kept vigils. St. Peter in prison, and the disciples who were assembled in the house of Mary, and Paul and Silas. As for the utility of vigils, I must now speak," continues this holy bishop, "although this can be more easily felt by the exercise than described by the words of a narrator; for it is by tasting that we see how sweet is the Lord. A good thing, indeed, is meditation by day; a good thing is prayer; but much more grateful and efficacious is nocturnal meditation; because in the day various necessities disturb us, occupation deadens the mind, multiplied cares distract the sense; but the night is secret; the night is quiet and opportune for prayer, and fitting those that watch; know, therefore, that vigils are agreeable to God *." "The hour of midnight," says St. Basil, "the hour of repose and silence, is the most favourable to the pure operations of the soul. The sight and the hearing receive then no impression from external things, the soul is then alone; it is disengaged from all earthly things; it is wholly occupied with God. During these precious moments of the night, the memory of sins presents itself most forcibly to her†." It is then that she discerns the rapid flight of life; while every thing else is at rest, the strides of death are more distinctly heard. The whole world seems abbreviated before her, as it did to St. Benedict in the night, and she may almost behold herself already entering upon the eternal world. Ah, well may the night seem solemn!

* Nicetius Episcop. de Vigiliis Servorum Dei, apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. III.

† Id.

These views may appear ungrounded and paradoxical to the present race of men; for alas! who now is permitted to taste the sanctified night of Christians, or even the Ambrosian night of Homer? Dead both to grace and nature, if men do not, like some of the ancients, devote the night to the rites of Bacchus *, it is made the time of all others in which, as if they studied purposely to contradict all that the holy Fathers have ever written, they least think of wisdom or of God, and thus the gloom of moral darkness is added to the obscurity of nature. To Adam after his fall, the natural night seemed full of horrors:

> ——————— "With black air
> Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom,
> Which to his evil conscience represented
> All things with double terror."

But during the middle ages, the night continued to appear as it did to the primitive Christians. "The night time is often favourable to devotion," says Thomas à Kempis, "and of no small assistance to sacred meditations †." If we reflect on the observation of Quinctilian, who remarked that when sleep was intermitted, thought was assisted by the very darkness of the night ‡, we shall have reason to expect that the people of the middle ages who so loved vigils, would be found upon investigation to have been eminently that thinking people, which the moderns are so fond of being considered. "The nights are dearer and more useful to me than the days," says the Abbot Peter, of St. Remi, in a letter to Berneredus, Abbot of St. Crispin. "My occupations by day hurry me away violently and fraudulently from myself, but the winter nights, by their length, confer on me a double benefit; for they give rest to my body, and they renew my spirits. They give liberty to revisit celestial things, and to inquire into their secrets, and also to be remindful of my friends §." Lucas, Archbishop of Cosenza, in the thirteenth century, used also to pass the night in writing, "yet" says the writer of his life, who lived with him, "to the conventual vigils in the Church he would

* Oppian de Venat. Lib. I. 25.
† Sermonum III. 11.
‡ Lib. X. 6.
§ Petri Cellens. Epist. Lib. V. 1.

always hasten, humbly singing and watching with the brethren *." Cardinal Bona observes, that the heavy and continued sleep of worldly people is as much opposed to health of body as to philosophy, according to the judgment of Aristotle †, of Hippocrates ‡, and of Avicenna. Then in alluding to the nocturnal vigils, he exclaims, "O si scirent homines quam sanctæ, quam gratæ Deo, quam salutares ecclesiastici, sed et fideles singuli, simul in unum dives et pauper, noctem verterent in diem nocturnis precibus summa studio insistentes §." St. Bernard shows how the night is peculiarly favourable for prayer. "When sleep involves the world in profound silence, then," saith he, "prayer will be purer and freer. How securely does it then ascend to God, the sole arbiter, and to the holy angel who is ready to present it on the supernal altar! How grateful is such prayer! How serene! and uninterrupted by any sound! How clear from all dust of terrene solicitude; exempt from all praise or flattery of mortal beholders! 'O insignem nocturni temporis prærogativam! O sacras noctes omni luce splendidiores ||!'" Not now devoted to Thessalian arts, but conscious of angelic light:

> "O nox purpureo splendidior die,
> O nox delitiis omnibus affluens ¶"

The heretics, beginning with Vigilantius, whom St. Jerome, on that account, calls the sleeper, condemned the nocturnal vigils and psalmody. Polidore Virgil, generally a rash and vain writer, affirms that they were always held in suspicion on account of the danger of immorality; but such an error says Cardinal Bona does not deserve to be confuted. In the third century, under Marcellus, it was, indeed, forbidden to keep vigils in the cemeteries, in those low regions where sad night hangs round the drowsy vaults, and where moist vapours steep the dull brows of those whose limbs are laid to rest, but no where is it written that the vigils in churches were condemned by the ancients. St. Philip Neri was even accustomed to pass the night frequently in the cemetery

* Italia Sacra, Tom. IX. 206.
† In Œconomicis.
‡ 2 Apth. 3.
§ De divina Psalmodia, 122.
|| Serm. ult. in Cant.
¶ Card. Bona, p. 128.

of St. Callistus on the Appian way *. St. Romuald had such a horror of sleep after vigils, that if any one confessed to him that he had indulged in it he would not allow him that day to celebrate mass †. Crodegand, Bishop of Metz, forbids the canons on pain of excommunication to sleep during the interval between nocturns and the early sacrifice, unless on account of sickness or with leave. The holy Abbot Ælredus, calls that a blessed interval which intervenes after the nocturnal psalmody, until the rising of the sun; for then he says, the heart is most refreshed with the sweetness of devotion. It is at this hour that celestial visions have been generally imparted to holy men. The rocks and woods of Alvernia were still involved in the solemn grey which precedes the first rosy streaks on the eastern sky, when the winged seraph in living flames descended upon Francis, giving the last signets to his saintly flesh by the fervour which it kindled. —Gilbertus, praising the same interval, exclaims,— "Deus bone! hora illa noctis quàm sine nocte est, quàm nox illa illuminatio in deliciis! Orationes illæ privatim fiunt, sed privata non petunt." Thus St. Anthony, after passing the night in prayer, when the sun rose in the morning, used to say, that it came to interrupt his peaceful ecstasy. St. Benedict used to pass the night in the upper chamber of a tower which rose above the monastery; and it was there, when all the other brethren were taking rest, that the holy man, while standing at a window on the south side, looking towards Capua, had that vision of the whole world, abbreviated amidst a sudden splendour which exceeded the light of the brightest day ‡. Pope St. Leo, when at Rome, used three times every week to walk by night barefooted from the Lateran Palace to St. Peter's Church, privately, attended by two or three clerks, praying and chaunting psalms §. When St. Odo was a monk at St. Martin's of Tours, he used in the night to go alone to pray at the sepulchre of the saint, which was at a distance of two miles from the college, and the wolves used to terrify

* P. Aringhi Roma Subterranea, p. 239.
† Petr. Damian in Vit. S. Romualdi.
‡ Chronica Casinensis, S. B. cap. 35.
§ Chron. S. Monast. Casinensis, Lib. II. 87.

him as he walked thither *. St. Gregory of Tours relates, that Trojanus, Bishop of Saintes, used to go, in the darkness of the night, to visit all the holy places which were within the circuit of that city, and attended only by one subdeacon †. Thus Neemias rose up by night, and a few men with him, and indicated to no one what God had put into his heart that he should do in Jerusalem. Thus did he go out by the gate of the valley by night, and before the fountain of the dragon, and thus did he contemplate the walls of Jerusalem broken down, and its gates consumed with fire. "For," says Hugo of St. Victor, "it is the duty of spiritual doctors to rise up often by night, and while other men sleep, to go about investigating the state of the Church, that they may discover how they may correct and raise up the things which have been defiled by sins, and overthrown by the tempests of war ‡."

These nightly exercises of devotion were practised also by the laity with great assiduity, during the middle ages. One of the most remarkable confraternities of the Church of Paris, was that bearing the date of the year 1205, and entitled "Confraternitas Beatæ Mariæ Parisiensis surgentium ad Matutinas," which was composed of pious persons of the city, who used to rise and repair to the church at midnight §. It is mentioned in the life of Madame de Maisons ||, that she used to rise constantly at that hour, and repair to the church of St. Eustache, her parish, when they chaunted matins.

This night of the middle ages must be dear to poets. O how solemn sounds the choral song while the nocturnal wind sweeps round the solitary pile! Angels then may be thought to beat their wings against the windows of churches; and sometimes has death seemed to beckon with its finger through them, to give salutary warning to a summoned soul.

The ecclesiastical decrees desired that all the people should come to nocturnal vigils ¶. It was, in fact, the practice of the laity, in the middle ages, as in primitive

* Bibliothec. Cluniac. † De Gloria Confessorum, 59.
‡ Allegor. in Lib. VIII. 11.
§ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. I. 1.
|| In 4to. 1657.
¶ Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars vi. c. 259.

times, to spend the vigils of festivals in the churches, and Drexelius laments its disuse in the wretched times in which he wrote. "Alas!" saith he, "what a progress! We indeed keep many nocturnal vigils; but it is over cups, amidst dancing, and playing at tables *." Mabillon, in his Itinerary of Germany, describes certain lanterns at the great gates of the church of the monastery of Luxen, and at that of Bonvaux near Chartres, to guide persons who came in the night to those churches †. "I remember," says an ancient monk, "that during eight days before the festival of St. Paulinus the Briton, Bishop of Capua, who died in 851, the bells used to sound at vespers, and that on the vigil of the feast, lights used to burn on the top of the tower ‡."

Sometimes persons kept vigils in churches throughout the whole night, without any lights burning §. The pious Emperor Henry, as often as he visited Rome, used to spend the first night in the Basilica of St. Maria Majora ‖. Drexelius also mentions the devotion of Mary de Œnies, who, with one attendant, used every year, and in the depth of winter, to remain during a whole night in the church of our Lady. Thus too, on the festival of the blessed martyr of the Brivatensian church, St. Gregory of Tours has occasion to relate, that a devout poor man came there to celebrate it, who having fastened his horse outside, entered the church, and there spent the night motionless, praying with the other people during the whole night, till break of day ¶. We read in the decrees of Ives de Chartres, that when a bishop was to hold his synod in a church, "all the persons were to be ejected at the first hour of the day, before the rising of the sun **."

To this discipline there was a remarkable exception in the sacred cave or church in the rocks of Mount Garganum, celebrated throughout the whole world on account of the apparition of St. Michael. For, from the

* De Jejunio, Lib. II. cap. 6.
† Iter Germanicum in Vet. Analecta.
‡ Italia Sacra, Tom. VI. 313.
§ S. Greg. Turon. Miracul. Lib. I. 5.
‖ Jo. Naucl. Gen. 34.
¶ S. Greg. Turon. Miracul. Lib. II. 21.
** Decret. Pars iv. 246.

first light till evening psalmody, sacred mysteries and prayers were offered there daily by clergy and people, during which time the doors were never closed; but through fear and reverence for the angelic choir, which was said to be present there during the night, no one was permitted to remain after the last office, when diligent search used to be made in order to expel all persons. In the year 1015, St. Henry the Emperor was received there to hospitality by Ursus, Archbishop of Siponto, when he came for the sake of devotion to visit this church of St. Michael. Passing the brazen gates, which were the gift of princes, and descending into that vast cavern obscure, distilling drops through the solid rock, he joined in the offices which were then solemnly sung before the great altar at the end of the choir, in which is a fountain of most sweet and transparent water. When the office was concluded, and every person commanded to withdraw, the saint indeed begged, and obtained permission, to remain in the church during that night; but this was an especial indulgence, which no one else ever enjoyed: and the subsequent lameness of the holy emperor was attributed, by contemporary writers, to the effects of the vision which was then vouchsafed to him, when, like another Jacob, he endured an angel's touch *.

The processions of penitents at Reims, in the year 1575, took place in the night. The Archbishop, Louis de Guise, assisted, walking barefoot along with a numerous confraternity. The litanies, sung with a mournful tone, were often interrupted by the sobs and plaintive cries of the penitents, which produced a most overpowering effect in the silence and horror of the darkness. These pilgrims anticipated, from the aspect of public affairs, the destruction of the Catholic religion in France, and hence their penitential vigil †. The night's dead silence did well become such sweet complaining sorrow.

It is still a devotion at Rome to go by night to the ancient Basilicas without the walls. One morning, leaving Rome while it was still dark, being three hours before sunrise, as I approached the gate of St. Lorenzo, I saw an extraordinary light moving towards me, which soon assumed the form of crosses of light.

* Italia Sacra, Tom. VII. 821.
† Anquetil, Hist. de Reims, Lib. IV. 147.

Presently I heard the murmur of prayers, and the solemn chaunt of the pilgrim's litany; a vast crowd of persons became half discernible, the men going first and the women following, and the light proceeded from two crosses borne alone, to which lamps were attached. It is impossible to describe the awful impression produced by such a spectacle at that hour, and on such ground! At first I supposed it to be a funeral train, but on inquiry I was told that they were persons returning to Rome, after hearing mass in the basilica of St. Lorenzo, without the walls. It struck me forcibly that here was a faith and thirst worthy of the days of the apostles. The first Christians could not have evinced greater fervour than these poor people, who filled the lonely precincts of the eternal city, at the bitter hour of damp exhalations, with prayers for mercy, with the praises of Christ, and of his blessed mother. At Lucca, there is a holy brotherhood whose members are appointed in turn to sound a bell before dawn, at the doors of such of the citizens as are accustomed to assist at the first mass, in order to apprize them of the hour, and light the torch which is to guide them to the Church. In the monastery of St. Apollonia, at Florence, there is a part granted to a confraternity of pious people, who assemble there only during the night. Through the foul womb of night, the hum of hasty passengers, who murmur prayers as they repair to churches, stilly sounds. There is no rest," says St. Paulinus, "for the multitude who repair to the festival of the blessed Confessor Felix, at Nola."

> ——— "Properant in lucem à nocte, diemque
> Expectare piget, votis avidis mora noctis
> Rumpitur, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt *."

Even without the interest of a more than ordinary occasion, the watchers who guard the city find them going about it, through the streets and squares, seeking Him whom their souls love. It was so common a practice to go to the church at matins, that the French had an ancient proverb,—"as dangerous as return from matins,"—to express the liability to fall into mischief in

* Italia Sacra, VI.

the dark from enemies or wolves *.—Petrarch writes as follows:—"I rise always at midnight, to sing the praises of God. The silence of the night is best suited to this employment. It is the part of my life when I am most myself, and most delightfully employed. It is a custom I have observed, which has never been interrupted but by sickness, and which I shall ever adhere to." We find him dating one of his letters from "the most retired corner of the Ambrosian house at Milan," under that light, and at the same hour, in which formerly the living Light arose upon the earth to enlighten men."—Nicholas Von der Flue, when father of a family at Saxeln, used to retire to rest with his household; but as soon as they were asleep, he would rise from his bed, leave his chamber, and spend in prayer to God all the remaining time till day break. His son, John, says of him, "my father used always to retire to rest with his children, but all night long, till morning, I have heard him pray in another room. The heavenly sweetness with which he used to be refreshed served him instead of sleep, so that in the morning, no one ever rose from bed so fresh and cheerful as he used from prayer †." It is curious to remark, that while private devotion instigated men to this dedication of the tragic melancholy night, the very laws of the state lent their assistance to secure it from profanation. By the French laws, all labourers were forbidden to work after vespers. Carpenters alone were permitted to work during the night, when coffins were to be made for the dead, or works for funeral ceremonies erected. It was not even lawful for tradesmen to sell goods till the appointed hour had struck, which was generally tierce or nine ‡. The Roman laws prohibited judgments from being passed at night, notwithstanding that Minerva had been made to sanction the contrary discipline of her own favoured tribunal §.

To the night of the middle ages belonged many solemn and poetic things, of which the trace only remains, as in some towns of England, where, at particular seasons of the year, during the night, one hears a small bell tolled a

* Pasquier Recherche de la France, Lib. VIII. 23.
† Leben und Geschichte des Nikol von Flüe, by Weissenbach.
‡ Monteil Hist. des Français, tom: III. 261.
§ Æschylus Eumenid. 692.

certain number of times, and then, in a mournful tone, some rude verses chaunted, which had been substituted, no doubt, for the ancient invitation to pray for the dead at that hour, a devotion to which indulgences were attached. In Italy during the octave at all souls, the bell for the dead tolls the whole night long, or at least for a considerable space about midnight. In the history of the church of Durham, we read, the "three bells of the lantern were rung ever at midnight, at twelve of the clock; for the monks went evermore to mattins at that hour of the night *." On arriving in Italy the traveller is soon reminded of the beautiful similitude which Dante draws from the tones that sanctify a Catholic night.

> As clock, that calleth up the spouse of God
> To win her bridegroom's love at matin's hour,
> Each part of other fitly drawn and urg'd,
> Sends out a tinkling sound, of note so sweet
> Affection springs in well-disposed breast †."

O, how does a youthful imagination then sympathise with all that the holy fathers have written respecting the night! how does it love that holy silence which reigns on all nature! The river has still its silver flood, but no more its murmur; the highways are desert, the cabins voiceless; no leaf trembles under the vaults of the wood, and the sea itself, expiring on the strand, scarcely rolls against it a plaintive wave ‡. How far is every thing here from the frown of sable-vested night, the consort of chaos! How holy is the Catholic night, the night of the middle ages! the time in which saints, all over the earth, are assembled to chaunt the same sacred hymns, and to commemorate the same great deliverance. Some seasons, indeed, there were, as those of Christmas and Easter, in which it was in an especial degree the privileged and blessed time; nights in which things celestial were joined to earthly, and divine to human; in qua terrenis cœlestia, humanis divina junguntur; for as the church of God says, it was, "while all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, that the Almighty word came from heaven, from the royal throne. Seven times in the year, mass used to be said at midnight. At

* I. 35. † Parad. X. ‡ De la Martine.

Christmas, in consequence of the ordinance of Pope St. Telesphorus, in the second century, on Holy Saturday, on the festival of St. John the Baptist, and on the collation of holy orders, on the four Saturdays of the Ember weeks *." For a long time after St. Leo, ordinations used to take place on the Saturday night of XII lessons, towards Sunday morning, after the second nocturn of matins, as appears from an ancient Roman order which was in the abbey of Vendome †.

But while the church of God is thus risen at the solemn midnight hour, where sit the world's children? Alas! for them, the night has no terrors, excepting when there is a question of going to the assemblies of the faithful: worshippers of pleasure—children of night, pursuers of private sins, as hot on the scent, as if like their elder sisters, sung by Æschylus, they were divinely deputed to follow the trace of blood that cried to heaven; who are in constant habits of braving the obscure air at the hour when rest is provided for all flesh, are immediately convinced that they would contract some fatal illness if the way were to the church instead of the festal hall. They might, it is said, meet revellers in the streets, and religion might incur disgrace if her temples were to be open at those hours, which the moderns, by common consent, think must needs be consigned over either to sleep or to Babylonian rites. To them we may address the words of St. Clemens Alexandrinus to the Pagans, who were initiated in the orgies of Bacchus, for, as he says, "in the mysteries of the Atheists," "formerly the silent night was to virtuous men a veil of sweetness, but now, to you, the sacred night is filled with the noise of dissolute speech ‡." If compelled to absent themselves on such occasions from the assemblies of the faithful, men were not heard in the middle ages to declaim against this devout and most ancient exercise, or to condemn as imprudent those who maintained its utility, as if almost it were an evil as great as heresy, to love the poetical side of a religious life. "Because you are infirm," said Nicetius the bishop, "do not condemn the vigils of others. It would be foolish and

* Benedict XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, II. Append. 388.
† Chardon Hist. des Sacramens, Tom. V. c. 6.
‡ Clem. Alex. Protrepticus, c. 2.

sufficiently foreign from religion to depreciate those who run well, because we are unable ourselves to run; though we have not the power, we ought not to envy but to congratulate those who have; for as he who consents to malice is partaker of the punishment, so, a participation in glory may be hoped for from a consent to goodness*."

But now the approach of rosy-fingered morn is witnessed in the eastern sky, and the melody of choirs is resumed to hail the hour of universal lauds to the eternal Founder of things, who ruleth day and night. Dominus regnavit, now is heard, and the rest which follows of that psalm in which, says Hugo de St. Victor, "Christ, with admirable brevity is multifariously praised†." The church seems to come forth refreshed and more than ever joyous. She descends to speak of all the various duties of men, and sings the dawn with transport; for then the army of errors deserts the hurtful way; the sailor collects his forces; straits and seas grow calm; at the crowing of the cock, hope returns; health is imparted to the infirm; the robber's sword is sheathed; faith is restored to the fallen; Jesus she invokes that he would look upon the wavering, for, at his look, sins would cease and crime be washed away with weeping; that he would enlighten the senses, and dispel the sleep of minds. At the rising of the star of light,—she prays to be protected from all hurtful things during that day,—that the tongue may be tempered so as to serve no horrid contention, that the sight may be directed so as to draw no vanity, that the heart's recesses may be pure and the pride of the flesh humbled: so that when the day shall depart, her children may be enabled, through abstinence, to sing glory to the coequal and eternal Three.

After the offices of lauds and prime succeeded the sacred mass, though in times of persecution, when the assemblies of the faithful were necessarily less frequent, the Eucharistic sacrifice was not daily offered. In the great church of Constantinople, down to the XIth century, mass used to be celebrated only on Sundays and Sabbath days and festivals, which was a vestige of the ancient necessity. Whereas, in all churches of less antiquity, the divine mysteries were daily celebrated according

* De vigiliis servorum Dei. Dacher. Spicileg. III.

† De Officiis Ecclesiasticis, cap. 10.

to pious usage *, sanctioned by the constitutions termed apostolical †. Mass used to be said daily in the time of St. Ambrose and St. Basil, after the example of the apostles ; a usage which is acknowledged to have existed in the first ages, even by Protestant writers ‡. St. Cyprien shows that mass should be said daily, and that all should communicate daily. To the like effect speaks St. Hilary. With the Greeks, they who passed three Sundays without communion were said to be excommunicated §. From the sixth century, the daily celebration of mass was a common discipline, but it appears that in the seventh it became still more general for pious men to assist every day at mass. St Goar celebrated mass every day, and the same is recorded of St Geremarus Abbot; and Bede affirms the same of Ceolfrid, the abbot of his monastery. The bishop, Licinus, is also related to have daily sung mass with great compunction of heart, but Mabillon interprets the word to mean only having simply recited it. In the eighth century, this discipline was enjoined by the decrees of the synods ||, and since the Council of Trent, it continued to be the universal practice of devout christians. "When you have risen from your bed," says Louis of Blois, "after making the sign of the cross and recommending your soul and body to the Most High, hasten to the church as to the place of your refuge and a garden of spiritual delights ¶". Hence we may remark, that on occasions of public danger or calamity, there was no necessity, as we read in the Pagan times of Rome, for the state to appoint a day of general prayer, for which a form of words was to be prepared, for the church had already her appointed course, and there was always a sacrifice ready and a sublime invocation for those who sought to propitiate the mercy of Heaven. What the venerable Bede said of priests, who, without a legitimate hindrance, fail to present the divine host to God every day, may well account for the zeal of holy men to offer up mass

* Thomassinus de veteri et nova Ecclesiæ disciplin. Pars III. Lib. I. c. 72.

† Const. Apost. II. 59. VIII. 35—39.

‡ Rheinwald Die Kirchliche Archæologie, p. 332.

§ Walafrid Strabo de rebus ecclesiasticis, cap. 20.

|| Mabill. Præfat. in II. Sæcul. Bened.

¶ Guide Spirit. cap. 2.

daily. "Tell me," cries the bishop Iona, in his "Institute of Laics," "tell me, you who come to the church only on feast days, are not the other days also feast days? Are they not days of the Lord, for on what day does not the church celebrate the victory of some martyr or confessor* ?" Pope Benedict XIV. considers the arguments of those who maintain that mass should not be daily celebrated, on the plea that "semper abundantia contumeliosa in se est," and that, "quicquid raro fit, pretiosius fit, cum fit," and that the priest who seldom celebrates is usually moved to tears, which he would not be if he daily offered. Having refuted these objections, he concludes thus:— "In this last objection there lies an ambiguity, for, as St. Antoninus says, 'If any one should estimate that disposition in himself, from the sensible compunction of heart, profusion of tears, fervour of mind, and similar sentiments, so that when he feels these, he believes himself to be disposed, and when he does not feel them, he supposes himself indisposed, he walks very uncautiously and is most often deceived. Frequently those who have no such things are in a state of grace, and they who have them are altogether without grace, though they do what is gracious.'"

Admirable was the diligence evinced by the church to enable the faithful people to perform their devotions without interruption to their social duties. Within the churches the divine mysteries were successively celebrated from break of day till noon, to suit the early traveller, the labourer, the domestic, the student, the charitable matron, the pious father of a family. We have seen that in almost every street there was a church or chapel, that no time might be lost in passing from the study or the workshop, or the palace. The number of altars in churches was partly designed for this object. In the church of the Holy Sepulchre, at Jerusalem, built by Constantine, there were three altars, but when visited by the bishop Arculfus, in the seventh century, it contained five altars. There were four in the Basilica of St. Mary, in the Vale of Josaphat. In the sixth century, it appears from St. Gregory of Tours †, there were two altars in the

* Ionæ Aurelianensis Episcop. de Institutione Laicali, Lib. I. cap. 2. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.

† De Gloria Mart. 34.

basilica of St. Peter at Bourdeaux. St. Ambrose also mentions many altars being in one church *. In the new church of the monastery of Cluny, which was dedicated in the year 1131, there were twenty-four altars. The altar of St. Gabriel, the Archangel, was in the tower of the bells; that of St. Michael the Archangel, was over the portal. The ancient chronicles of Strasbourg attest that there were formerly in that cathedral fifty altars. In some churches a mass used to be said expressly for servants †. Portable altars were in use long before the eleventh century. St. Wilfram, bishop of Sens, passing the sea in a ship, is said to have celebrated the sacred mysteries upon a portable altar. Bede ‡ relates that the two Ewaldes offered sacrifice daily, having with them vessels and the table of an altar dedicated. Hincmar prescribed that no one should celebrate mass upon an altar which was not consecrated. All this discipline prevailed at least as early as in the fifth century.

The Eucharistic sacrifice terminated, the church resumed her holy songs, and celebrated tierce and sext, after which followed an interval of repose while the day reigned in its fulness. But nothing is constant with men. Every thing revolves and perishes. "Alas," exclaims Bona, "we proposed to perform great things when the sun was mounted to the meridian, and lo! in a short time, it descends to evening. The church is about to sing nones. It is the ninth hour, in which Christ died for man, in which man had been expelled from paradise §; the day is become old, the night is approaching; such is the frailty of this mortal life. How soon the day declines, the heat cools, the light sinks and is buried in the shade of evening, but we must run our course until we shall behold the Lord of Lords in Sion." Nones having been sung, the church prepares to celebrate a more august office.

It is the vesper hour. "Ah, what a symbol is here," cries Bona. "Let us say, therefore, with the disciples, whose hearts burned within them by the way, 'Mane nobiscum, Domine, mane nobiscum, quoniam advesperascit.' Now evening, the mother of night, will bring forth darkness; now sadness oppresses us, and despair

* Joan. Devoti Instit. canonic. Lib. II. tit. vii. §. 1.
† Lebeuf, Hist. du diocèse de Paris, chap. Corbeil.
‡ Lib. V. cap. 11. § Durandus Rationale, Lib. V. 8.

sinks us down. The waters have come even unto our soul: now a horrible tempest afflicts our spirits: the cold of iniquity freezes us, and a wounded conscience dreads the terrible sentence of the Judge. Remain with us, O most clement Lord, since without thee we can do nothing; we are nothing! Thou art our consolation, thou art our refuge and strength; thou art a tower of might against the face of our enemies. The night of wickedness covers all things; the light of truth faileth; depravity abounds; charity grows cold; our eyes are turned to thee, that we may not perish. Remain with us, that the darkness may not come upon us, and that the shining light, which shineth to us in that dark place, may not be extinguished in the night. The end of life is near; the evening of our day: deliver us from the power of darkness, and turn not in anger from thy servants; because if thou art with us, we shall fear no evil in the midst of the shadow of death, but with the brightness of thy grace we shall be enlightened in that region of the dead. It is good to be with thee, O sweet Jesus. Remain with us, and turn not away from us. These are the shades of evening; the darkest night draws on, in which no man can work. Remain with us, and close the door upon us, until the darkness shall pass over, and light again rise to visit us *."

O, who can appreciate the charm of these short, pathetic, affectionate addresses from the altar, after vespers, when so many a youth is grateful to the darkness for concealing his falling tears!

It is the vesper hour, when the poor soul thirsts and hungers more intensely, inasmuch as the trials of the day have worn her down. It is now that she seeks the silence of ancient groves, and the peaceful walks of moss-grown battlements. The very poet of the secular society is not insensible to its influence:—

> "Sweet hour of twilight!—in the solitude
> Of the pine forest, and the silent shore
> Which bounds Ravenna's immemorial wood,
> Rooted where once the Adrian wave flow'd o'er
> To where the last Cæsarean fortress stood.
> Ever-green forest! which Boccaccio's lore

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* Card. Bona de Divina Psalmod. ccxxii.

And Dryden's lay made haunted ground to me;
How have I loved the twilight hour and thee!"

Pythagoras prescribed that in the evening, before the hour of rest, after the perturbations of the day and the tumult of action, the mind, which is then moved like a flood, should be appeased and composed by the sound of gentle music *. We read of our Divine Lord, that having dismissed the crowd, he ascended a mountain alone to pray; and when it was evening, he was there alone †. In the heart of cities, and even wherever the towers of a feudal castle cast their broad shadow over the open lands, there was always, during the middle ages, a sacred portal, sure to be open to receive the pilgrim, at the evening hour, to a temple, in which he might compose his turbid thoughts by holy meditations, joined with those Hypodorian strains, which soothe the imagination and tranquillize the heart.

Vespers were always celebrated with more solemnity than any other of the lesser hours. St. Benedict prescribes that they should be fully and sweetly sung.

But now begins night, with her sullen wings, to double-shade the desert.—

"Good things of day begin to droop and drowse,
While night's black agents to their prey do rouse."

Fowls in their clay nests are couched, and wild beasts come forth, the woods to roam. Five, six, seven—the clock has ceased, and now we shall hear the toll of the cloister bell for the benediction. Complins may represent the end of life, as it is the last office of the day;—for, as Pindar says, "Men are but of one day, and the shadows of a dream." How delightful that calling to memory of the complin hymn, when Dante marked, from among the spirits that sat apart in limbo,

"One risen from its seat, which with its hand
Audience implor'd. Both palms it join'd and rais'd,

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* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 15.
† Matt. xiv. 23.

Fixing its stedfast gaze towards the East—
'Te lucis ante,' so devoutly then
Came from its lip, and in so soft a strain,
That all my sense in ravishment was lost.
And the rest after, softly and devout,
Follow'd through all the hymn, with upward gaze,
Directed to the bright supernal wheels *."

Complin sung, silence was observed till after mass the following morning. This was prescribed by St. Benedict; and we find the observance recommended by all the great spiritual writers of the middle age †. Now succeeded the solemn matin bell, tolling at the hour of nature's silence and repose, which seems like a suspension of this mortal life! "O awful sound!" cries Bona. "One's course then seems finished. Then we may say with the holy Columban, 'O tu vita quantos decepisti! quæ dum fugis, nihil es; dum videris, umbra es: quæ quotidie fugis, et quotidie venis, veniendo fugis, quæ fugiendo venis: dissimilis luxu, similis fluxu. Te ostendis tanquam veram, te reducis quasi fallacem. Ergo nihil es, O mortalis vita, nisi viæ imago, fugitiva ut avis, ut nubes incerta, fragilis ut umbra ‡.'"

CHAPTER III.

The divisions of the sacred hours marked, let us proceed to observe the general character belonging to all these offices of grace: for there is much in them intelligential and abstruse, that deserves deep attention, much to excite a reasonable and pious curiosity, and somewhat, perhaps, to explain and defend, in consideration of the ignorance and wants of an age which has endeavoured to render every thing perspicuous but what relates to hea-

* Purg. VIII. † D'Avila, Epist. LXVII.
‡ S. Columban. Homil. de Fallacia Vitæ Humanæ.

ven, and which toils unceasingly to make vain provision for the gratification of every thirst but that of justice.

To have seen the importance of an uniform liturgy, one must have felt the necessity for its being unchangeable, and that for the reason assigned by St. Augustin: "Lex orandi, lex credendi;" for the prayers which the Church uses in the administration of her holy rites, are so many proofs of the respective doctrines on which they depend; and these prayers could only be preserved from alteration through a long series of ages, by retaining the ancient language in which they were originally composed*.

Stephen Pasquier has well said, "Il ne faut rien eschanger de ce que une longue ancienneté a approuvé en une religion; voire jusques aux paroles mesmes †." Divine Providence had caused the language of Rome to become, in a certain sense, universal, in order to facilitate the extension of the Gospel and the maintenance of ecclesiastical unity, as in earlier ages he had preserved the Semitic languages in a state of immobility, in order, as Walton supposes, to render more easy the migrations and external relations of the patriarchs; or, as the Count de Robiano suggests, to preserve more unchangeable, clear, and certain, the reading of the sacred text ‡.

The Germans, Franks, Poles, and all northern nations, when converted to the faith, received the liturgy in the Latin tongue. The Moravians, indeed, form an exception, to whom, in 867, Adrian II. gave permission to have mass celebrated in the Sclavonic, but he himself recalled this faculty, which was again given to them by his successor, and again recalled in the eleventh century by Alexander II. The only answer that the Duke of Bohemia could obtain on this head from Gregory VII. who had a deep conviction of the necessity of the ancient discipline, was this—"Scias nos huic petitioni tuæ nequaquam satisfacere posse." In fact, had this most important law of discipline been abrogated, a wide field would have been opened to innovators in matters of faith —for the living languages, in consequence of the natural disposition of men to be esteemed great and distin-

* Vide Digressio Historic. II. in Chron. S. Monast. Casinens. cap. 32.

† Recherches de la France, Lib. VIII. 12.

‡ Etudes sur l'Ecriture de l'Egypte.

guished, are liable to constant mutations—and therefore, it would have been necessary to translate the liturgy as often as languages changed. There would be as many versions as tongues and dialects; so that there would be no end of making liturgies, and the doctrines of faith, at the mercy of human vanity, could no longer be preserved, as in a sacred asylum, under the faithful key of the ancient language.

Besides this we must remark that, in the ages of faith, men were not children in philosophy: they had drawn for themselves the proper inference from the fact remarked by Clemens Alexandrinus, when speaking of "the first and generative languages, which," saith he, "are barbarous, but supplied with names from nature;" he observes, "and men confess that prayers delivered in a barbarous—that is, in a tongue different from their own—are more impressive; *καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι δυνατωτέρας εἶναι τὰς βαρβάρῳ φωνῇ λεγομένας**." Certainly there was no reason why theologians, in reference to the use of things divine, should not possess the same advantage as was proved to be so conducive to the good of poets with the Greeks and Latins, who had a distinct language by which they could convey the most familiar things in terms intelligible to all, and yet wholly different from those under which they might be associated with vulgar or unworthy ideas, from being in common use. This usage did not contradict the maxim, that it was the simple and ignorant who were capable of the highest prayer: for, as St. Thomas and St Bonaventura distinguish the three modes of attention to the divine offices, the first consisting in the material pronunciation of the words—the second in their literal sense—the third in their mystic sense, which is God: the first, which relates to the words, belonging not to the simpler sort, who are ignorant of Latin; the second, which relates to the sense, regarding theologians and learned men; the third, which relates to the affections, belonging to monks and men of devout life, although they may be void of letters; it follows that incompetency with regard to the first, which is called the material, and even a less degree of knowledge respecting the second, which is termed the formal, diminishes not the perfection of those

* Stromat. Lib. I. c. 21.

who possess the third, which is the final attention, constituting the piety of the religious and the poor *. Pure prayer, as Hugo of St. Victor defines it, is when the mind, from the abundance of devotion, is so inflamed with love, that when it supplicates God, it forgets the precise object of its desire †.

Unction, again, no less incommunicable than authority, is the distinctive character of the prayers of the Catholic Church. This impressive quality can be felt; it can never be defined. It is the ravishing expression of a filial confidence; it is the work of the spirit of love, which prays in the Church by ineffable groans. It is the result of order and peace; it is the echo of a soul, of which all the faculties are held in accordance by obedience. The words of the Roman liturgy, besides that they are the expression of the vows of the Church, which is holy, are also the words of saints, of men capable of finishing the hymn begun by angels. These texts chosen in Scripture to edify piety, have been selected by humble, and innocent, and fervid souls, accustomed to find in them the sweetest nourishment. These mysterious words, which they have given us from their own fund, breathe still the faith and the candour of past ages. In general, the deeper we search, the more we shall be convinced that there is a profound reason for every institution of the ecclesiastical order. True, the Church offices, in the solemn antiquity and symbolism of their language, may have presented difficulties; but these are greatly exaggerated by the moderns. They were such as might easily be overcome where desire was felt; and of them we may say, in the words of St. Augustin, speaking of the many and multiplex obscurities in the holy Scriptures—that all this was purposely provided in order to subdue pride by labour, and to prevent the understanding from becoming fastidious, which generally contracts a contempt for things of easy investigation: for, as Pellico justly observes, "Exquisite sentiments, whether of art or of morals, are only acquired by a diligent will, and by assiduous efforts ‡."

* S. Thom. 2. 2. 9. 85, art. 13. S. Bonav. Lib. VII. de Process. Relig. c. 3.

† De Modo Orandi Libellus, cap. 2.

‡ Dei Doveri Degli Uomini, cap. 12.

Men babble now of the necessity of having prayer composed in language more refined; but as De Maistre remarks, "the beauty of prayer has nothing in common with that of expression, for prayer is like the mysterious daughter of the great king, 'omnis gloria filiæ regis ab intus.' It is something without a name, but which is perfectly perceptible, and which mere talent alone can never imitate." Perhaps one might affirm with justice, that a studied expression would distract and misdirect the attention; at least, there are many who might cite the words of the ancient critic in reference to the style of Cato and the Gracchi, and say in allusion to themselves, "veterem illum horrorem dicendi malim quam istam novam licentiam *." But yet on the other hand, where shall we find, in the true sense of the term, grace of composition, if it be not discernible in the voice of the Church? What skills it to study harmony of words if here be not the soul stirring might of poesy?

——— "Ah, that piece of song,
That old and antique song, methought it did relieve my
Heart much more than light airs, and recollected terms
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times."

That frequent repetition of uniform syllables and the sound of these terrible finals in the ancient pieces, when sustained by the majestic gravity of the Gregorian chaunt, possessed a great empire over minds. Cicero remarks the grandeur of many monotonous finals in a verse, and adds, "Præclarum carmen! est enim et rebus et verbis et modis lugubre." The lines which he thus eulogises might be passed on a modern reader for a monkish composition.

"Hæc omnia vidi inflammari,
Priamo vi vitam evitari,
Jovis aram sanguine turpari †."

Those archaisms too or antiquated forms of expression abounding in the Vulgate, which are elsewhere only met in writers anterior to the Augustan age, were rather a

* Quintill. Lib. VIII. 5. † Tuscul. III. 5.

beauty than a defect in the divine offices. The introduction of words, also new to the Latin tongue, but required by the doctrines of faith, was another feature calculated to awaken noble and devout thoughts. Vivifico is a word not used by profane writers. St. Jerome was driven to the necessity of often adopting it, as the idea of giving or restoring life is so essentially Christian, that no heathen could have been found to express it. The classic authors would themselves defend this usage on principles of common sense, for as Cicero says, "logicians, physicians, geometers, musicians, and grammarians, speak after their own manner, and use peculiar words. Not even common workmen can retain their arts without using words unknown to us, but in use with themselves. 'Quo magis hoc philosopho faciendum est. Ars est enim philosophia vitæ; de qua disserens arripere verba de foro non potest *.'" Zeno himself was an inventor rather of new words than of new things. If this was permitted to Zeno, why not to St. Jerome? "Sunt enim rebus novis nova ponenda nomina," says Cicero, citing the example of Epicurus himself, who called προλήψιν what before him no one had ever named by that word †. The celebrated lexicographer, Gesner, used to say, that he considered the Vulgate as a classical work, since it enabled him to survey the Latin language in its full extent. But even if no such titles were available, men should learn, as St. Augustin says, that "it is not the voice but the affection of mind which reaches to the ears of God. Therefore, they ought not be disposed to laugh if they should hear God invoked with barbarisms or solecisms, for though it is by a tone in the forum, it is by a vow in the Church that they are blessed. 'Itaque forensis illa nonnumquam forte bona dictio, numquam tamen benedictio dici potest.' Of the sacrament which they are about to receive, it is sufficient to the more prudent to hear the meaning, but with minds of slower apprehension, it is necessary to employ more words and similitudes, lest they should despise what they behold." The high antiquity of the Roman offices may be seen also in these responses and anthems composed of words from the ancient Vulgate, whose religious and apostolic simplicity is long anterior to the age of St.

* De Finibus, Lib. III. † De Nat. Deorum, Lib. I.

Jerome, in that division of the Psalms traced by this great doctor at the desire of Pope Damasus, after the ancient usage which recalls the vigils of the first Christians,—in the mysterious, profound, and inimitable style of the collects, and other deprecatory formula, in those hymns composed by a great bishop in the Ambrosian Basilica to occupy a faithful people while besieged by a furious princess, in those hymns of Prudentius, Sedulius, Gregory, and Hilary, of an Innocent and a Thomas Aquinas. In truth, I should never finish were I to trace, in reference to antiquarian lore, all the grandeur and interest of the Roman Liturgy. Shall I speak of the sublime chaunts which have come down to us along with these admirable prayers! I might call to witness even Protestant authors in whose ears they have never sounded without causing to vibrate the Catholic chord. Who has not felt the charm of these sublime passages imprinted with the genius of ages that are no more, and that have left no other vestige behind them? Who has not shuddered at the simple plain chaunt of the office of the dead when the tender and the terrible are so admirably blended? What Christian has ever heard the pascal chaunt of "Hæc dies," without a sentiment of infinity, or the "O filii et filiæ," without feeling his heart inflamed with a more tender love for the children of men? Who has ever heard on the festivals of the Assumption and of All Saints, a whole people making the holy vaults resound with the inspired accents of the Gaudeamus without feeling himself carried back, through the lapse of ages, to the time when the echoes of subterraneous Rome repeated this triumphal chaunt, while the empire was hastening to its end, and the Church commencing its eternal destinies*?

But not only was Latin the language of the Church, symbolical too in the highest sense was the expression of her desires, so that in proposing her liturgy as an object of literary and philosophic study, one might say each moment in the words of Dante,

> ——— "Ye of intellect
> Sound and entire, mark well the lore conceal'd
> Under close texture of the mystic strain †."

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* Le Mémorial Catholique, I. 2.

† Infer. c. 9.

The origin of this whole discipline must be sought for in the very nature of things, for as a German philosopher observes, "all thought-communication of men upon religious truth must in its affirmative expression be figurative and exhibited in symbols *." Angels behold spiritual things by means of divine illumination, but to mortal eyes they can only be presented through the medium of sensible symbols. The language of the Church in this respect meets us still in every department of the arts, where it is often not comprehended; for it was in conformity with it that painters and sculptors employed those lilies, pelicans, stags, and other objects of visible nature to signify spiritual and invisible things. The creature as well as Scripture being, as Hugo of St. Victor saith, the book of God to recall man to the true and immutable good †. How naturally and unavoidably the Church inclined to this usage will be obvious at once, if we bear in mind the practice of the Holy Scripture, and above all the example of our Lord, the fact of whose profound parables should put to silence the rash objectors who would blame the Church, without considering that the symbol is the same whether it consist in words or in visible objects. Who need be told that the judgment of the wise in all ages has sanctioned the use of symbols? Clemens Alexandrinus ‡ relates that Hipparchus, the Pythagorean, was expelled from the school, because he had openly written down the precepts of the Master; and that they placed a column to him as to a person that was dead. The wise ancients saw the necessity of using allegory and figure in the expression of sublime truth. Gregory Nazianzen says, that the sacred mysteries are not to be explained before the base, according to the principle expressed by Sallust, the philosopher, that to hide truth in fables, prevents the foolish from despising, and compels the studious to philosophize §, for which reason it was that the Egyptians placed sphynxes at the entrance of their temples. But let us remark the difference between the figures of the ancient sanctuaries and those of the Catholic temple. In the former, the symbol which conveyed truth only to a few of the initiated, gave birth to

* Fries Religios Philosophie und Philosophischen Æsthetik.
† Institut. Monasticæ Sermo VIII. ‡ Strom. Lib. V.
§ Lib. de Diis et Mundo, cap. 3.

the grossest idolatry with the rest of men; whereas the Church, on the contrary, commences with a verbal and authoritative promulgation, and only after that clothes the mysteries which it has announced in sensible forms as an earthly refraction of the heavenly light, accommodated to the necessities of her children. The Christian use of mystic words dates from the very cradle of the Church. "The use of symbolic language," says Clemens Alexandrinus, "is most useful for many things; it is conducive to right theology, to piety, to the exercise of understanding, to brevity of speech, and it is an argument of wisdom *." He remarks that the style of the old Greek as well as of the Hebrew philosophy was enigmatical, for that brevity of expression was studied as most useful and persuasive. He shows that the prophets made use of enigmas, and that the mysteries were not shown clearly to all men alike, but only after certain purifications and previous instruction. "In a word," he says, "all theologians, both barbarians and Greeks, concealed the principles of things, and delivered truth through enigmas and symbols, in allegories and metaphors, and such tropes. Nay, even the wise men of the Greeks conveyed their lessons in short words and apophthegms, such as γνῶθι σαυτὸν and the like. The poets also teaching the theology of the prophets, philosophize by means of allegory, as did Orpheus, and Linus, Musæus, Homer, Hesiod, and other wise men of that class, more obscurely conveying truths in dreams and symbols, not through envy, but that by means of searching out the sense of the enigma, men might be more enticed to the discovery of truth. In the same manner," he remarks, "we are instructed in the Psalms and in the prophets, where the Lord opens his mouth in parables †; and by the apostles who speak wisdom to the initiated, the wisdom of God in a mystery which the princes of this world knew not." "Sapientes abscondunt scientiam," says Solomon, in order that the mocker may seek wisdom and not find it ‡; for the first essential qualification for understanding symbolic language is a revering spirit. All ancient wisdom certainly recognized the importance of symbolic instruction. The Pythagorean symbols were celebrated in the philosophy of the barbarians, such as "keep no

* Stromat. V. 8. † Isa. lxv. 3. ‡ Parab. X.

swallows in your house," that is, have no talker or busy body, and smooth down your bed when you rise from it, that is, extirpate every vestige of passion. In fact, the symbolic mode of teaching by enigmas was characteristic of the whole Pythagoric institution *. Idanthuras, the Scythian king, as Phercydes the Syrian relates, replied to Darius by a symbol instead of by words †. Androcydes, the Pythagorean, describes the letters called Ephesian, as consisting of symbols and obscure expressions, as for instance, darkness is called *ἄσκιον*, from having no shadow, and light *κατάσκιον*, since it involves a shadow; *τετρὰς*, is the year, from its having four seasons, and *βέδυ* was the air, as being *βιόδωρον* ‡. The stoics say that Zeno in order to prove the vocation of his disciples, wrote his first instructions in such an obscure manner that it was hard to understand them. In like manner, the writings of Aristotle were twofold, *τὰ ἐσωτερικὰ* for his initiated, and *τὰ ἐξωτερικὰ* for the vulgar without, and the former were unintelligible to common men.

What is mysticism? what must be mystically viewed? Religion, love, nature, and state. The Church offices were composed of symbols, and as an ascetic writer remarks, "nisi omnia referantur ad laudem Creatoris, inanis est omnis visio videntium §." "Every thing in the Church is full of divine signification and mystery," says Durandus. "Every thing in it abounds in celestial sweets, when one knows how to look at it, when one knows how to draw the honey from the stone, and the oil from the hardest flint. Who can enable us to do this? Lord, the well is deep, and I have no vessel wherewith to draw the water! It is for the priests, the dispensers of the mysteries, to comprehend and reveal them to others." To condemn the use of symbolic instruction as unworthy of an age of the highest intelligence, would indicate a total ignorance of the general law and construction of human minds, since whatever be the method of instruction adopted, the fact which Dante remarks is incontrovertible, that

> ——— "from things sensible alone ye learn
> That, which, digested rightly, after turns
> To intellectual ||."

* Jamblich. 34. † Strom. V. 7. ‡ Id. V. 8.
§ Thom. à Kemp. Hortulus Rosarum. || Parad. IV. 41.

It should be observed, moreover, that the spirit of the middle ages was peculiarly favourable to this method, so that the symbols adopted in the ritual of the Church, must have then possessed extraordinary charms in the estimation of all ranks of society. No object or occasion seemed too trifling to furnish matter for the exercise of their disposition to view things in the light of symbols. Ives, of Chartres, receiving a comb as a present from his dear friend Gerard, in reply to him, interprets it as an emblem which can teach him the duties of his episcopal office *. The laity evince the same inclination: men that were not all tongue, but deeds and truth, would thus in the common intercourse of life, in dumb significants proclaim their thoughts, and, as Shakspeare witnesseth in the Temple garden, give, in the plucking of a red rose or a white, an answer to the summons of Plantagenet. Dom Claude de Vert, a learned Benedictine, in his work upon the ceremonies of the Church, offered a simple and natural explanation of most of them. Languet, Archbishop of Sens, published a reply, and assigned to them a wholly symbolical origin. Both of these views no doubt were just. As Duns Scotus remarks of the sacred Scriptures, the divine offices of the Catholic Church had a literal and a spiritual or mystic sense, which last, in threefold division, was either allegorical, tropological, or anagogical, referring either to what was to be believed, performed, or hoped, and sometimes one sign or word, like that of the cross, or the name Jerusalem comprised all—a literal sense, signifying an event or a city, a tropological, denoting trust and sanctity, an allegorical, denoting the Church militant, and an anagogical, signifying the triumphant Church †. No one who loves to study the doctrine of perception, in reference to the beauties of poetry and art, can be insensible to the care evinced by the Church, to press into her service every thing which can bring unity into a visible form; and, indeed, the great charm and might of poetry over human life, is never more fully felt than when it employs consecrated figures and symbols to express the mystery of our existence in the world of wishes, and the ideas of anticipation which console it. That the symbolic sense was intended in

* Ivonis Carnotens. Epist. VI.

† Duns Scoti Miscellan. IX. 6.

the ceremonies of faith, is proved from the ancient fathers. Thus St. Ambrose says to the Neophytes, who have been just initiated by baptism into the Christian mysteries, "Recollect what you have done, what you have seen. You have seen the Levite, you have seen the priest, you have seen the high-priest. Consider not the figures of bodies, but the grace of mysteries. You have spoken in the presence of angels, for he is an angel who announces the kingdom of Christ and eternal life. Esteem him not by the appearance, but by the gift. Consider the ancient mystery of the holy rites. Do not believe only your bodily eyes, for what is seen is temporal, but what is perceived only by the mind is eternal; and do not regard the merit of the persons, but the office of the priests. Believe that Jesus our Lord was present, by reason of devout prayer, and the celebration of his mysteries. In the washing of the feet recognize that the mystery itself consists in the ministration of humility; in the white robe, and the unction, and the cutting off of the hair, and in all the rites, observe how beautiful is the Church, and how she desires to arrive at the interior mystery, and to consecrate all the sense to Christ. You have seen the most holy altar composed, and the people approaching to it. Remember that the sacraments of the Church are more ancient than those of the synagogue, and more excellent than the manna; for there is the offering of a priest for ever, and that which you have received is the bread of angels, the very body of Christ. For here there is no order of nature, where there is excellence of grace. You have seen, therefore, the mysteries of the Church, which is said to be an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain, to signify that the mystery ought to remain sealed with you, that it may not be broken by the deeds of an evil life, or divulged to improper persons, or disclosed to the perfidious by garrulous loquacity, but that it should be placed under the protection of faith, and of a holy life and silence *." St. Thomas says, that it is on account of the war which the ancient enemy always makes against those who are at prayer, that the Church directed by the Holy Ghost, begins all the canonical hours with "Deus, in adjutorium meum intende," a custom of immemorial usage. At

* De iis qui mysteriis initiantur, Lib.

matins, this is preceded with the verse, "Domine, labia mea aperies," because after complins the preceding evening the lips had been closed, and therefore in beginning the nocturnal office, this prayer was added, that God would vouchsafe to open the lips of his servant to praise his name. Amalarius, shows the origin of the antiphons and the double chorus of the Church offices. The antiphon, which refers to love, is alternately sung by the two sides of the choir, because charity cannot exist where there are not at least two to respond. That charity, therefore, may be perfect, it was necessary that there should be one to whom the other might exhibit its affection. Therefore, the psalms are sung with alternate modulation to evince mutual love. In vain he prepares to sing the psalm who does not join to it the antiphon of love. On the more solemn festivals, the antiphon is double, to show that love ought then to be more perfect. In others, the beginning of the psalm is imperfectly announced, and at the end it is completed, because, as Hugo of St. Victor says, "Charity begun in this life is to be consummated in the end. The chanter alone begins the antiphon, which is then finished by all, because charity from one Christ is diffused into all the members. After the psalms all in common joy sing the antiphon, because common joy springs from common charity." On the use of the Allelujah, Hugo of St. Victor says, "Here neither words nor understanding suffice, and yet love will not admit of silence. Therefore, the Church by thus uttering sound—pneumatizing—indicates admirably, with more expression, and in a better manner without words, than it could by means of words, what is the joy of God where words shall cease. For by this sound, though we do not describe what it is to feel eternal joy, at least, we show that it is indescribable. And since the praises of eternal life will not resound in human words, the sequences are sometimes mystically sounded forth without words; for no signification of words is necessary where the hearts of all will be laid open to all beholding the book of life *." The Rubrics prescribed that the number of the collects should be always uneven, for the Church desires unity and conjunction, which is expressed by an uneven num-

* Hugo de Sanct. Victor, Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ, cap. 7.

ber, which, as it cannot be cut into equal parts, preserves its integrity *. The credo is repeated in some of the offices, partly in secret, and partly aloud, to show as Cardinal Bona says, that "Corde creditur ad justitiam, ore autem confessio fit ad salutem." St. Edmund, the Cistercian monk, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his Mirror of the Church, seemed to reprehend all prayers but the divine form taught by our Lord, which was in fact the universal prayer of the middle ages, as Dionysius the Carthusian observes †. But Cardinal Bona shows the necessity of attending to his real meaning, lest we should conclude that he actually did intend to condemn all other forms according to the heresy of Basil ‡. Hugo of St. Victor, indeed, shows that the several petitions contained in this divine prayer, correspond to the graces which qualify men for beatitude, since their fulfilment would render men poor in spirit to hallow the name of God, meek to inherit his kingdom, mourners, from the repentance attached to that knowledge produced by submission to his will, hungry and thirsty after justice, seeking from heaven their daily bread, merciful, from a consideration of their own trespasses, clean of heart, being freed from temptation to the vices which obscure the intelligence, and children of peace, in consequence of being delivered from evil §. The Church also uses a certain language of impassioned piety borrowed from the mystic Scriptures, which Richard of St. Victor thus proceeds to explain. "Reason and affection," saith he, "have both their hand-maidens, imagination and sensuality. So much is each necessary to its own mistress, that without them the whole world itself could confer nothing upon them, for without imagination reason would know nothing, and without sensuality, affection would taste nothing ||." "Osculetur me osculo oris sui. Fulcite me floribus, stipate me malis, quia amore langueo. Favus distillans labia tua, mel et lac sub lingua tua." "What, I pray," asks this devout contemplatist, "can be

* Bened. XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, I. 110.

† De Judic. Anim. XXXVIII.

‡ Yet a late writer in the Quarterly Review accuses him of a superstitious fondness for formulæ of prayers!

§ In Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ, cap. 7.

|| De Præparatione Animi ad Contemplationem, cap. 5.

sweeter than these words? What can be more agreeable? What language would be heard more willingly, more greedily? These words seem to sound something carnal, and yet they are spiritual things which are described by them. Thus Nephtalim knows how to mix carnal with spiritual things, and to describe incorporeal by bodily things; so that the two-fold nature of man finds in his discourse whence he can admirably refresh himself, consisting as he does of a bodily and of an incorporeal nature. Hence it is that these things sound so sweet to man *." But in order to understand this point more fully, let us again hear Richard. "After the human race," saith he, "had been expelled from the joys of Paradise, entering on the journey of the present life, it had a blind heart, to which if it had been said by a human voice, follow God, or love God, as is said in the law, once sent out and cold with the torpor of infidelity, it would not understand what it heard. Therefore, by certain enigmas, the divine word speaks to the torpid and frigid soul, and by the things which it knoweth secretly, doth it insinuate into it the love which it knoweth not. For allegory to a soul placed far from God, is, as it were, a certain machine by which it may be raised to God, by means of interspersed enigmas, while something which it knows in words of its own, it understands in the sense of words which is not of its own, and by earthly words it is separated from the earth, for knowing exterior words it comes to understand interior. Hence in the book of the song of songs, words of corporeal love are employed, that from the body the soul may be warmed, and led to the love which is spiritual: in which words the holy Scripture is not to be ridiculed, but rather the greater mercy of God is to be considered. For it is to be remarked, how wondrously and mercifully it deals with us in this condescension. We ought, therefore, in these corporeal words to seek what is interior, and as if to leave the body. We ought to this marriage of the spouse to come with the understanding of intimate charity, that is, with the nuptial vest with which if we are not clothed we shall be driven away to eternal darkness and the blindness of ignorance. We ought by these words of passion to pass to the virtue of impassibility, for the holy Scripture in its words is

* De Præparatione Animi ad Contemplationem, cap. 24.

like a picture in its colours, and he is foolish indeed, who so adheres to the colours as to be ignorant of the thing which is painted *."

But it was not in words alone that the enigmatical expression of the Church was conveyed. Her ceremonies also were high symbols, demonstrating things of which the mystic sense and invisible truth are known by divine illumination to the angelic spirits. Philosophers and poets will find no works more rich in profound and beautiful thoughts than those which are designed to develope and explain the ecclesiastical symbols, written during the middle ages by such men as Hugo and Richard of St. Victor, Durandus †, Duranti ‡, Remy of Auxerre §, Honoré St. Autun ||, St. Bruno of Asti ¶, Martene **, and many others. The symbolic sense of the holy vestments worn by her priests was seen in the sublime prayers which they repeated as they clothed themselves to minister at the altar ††. A long sermon of Ives de Chartres is devoted to explaining, for the edification of manners, the mystic beauty of the priest's vestment, in which every part had a divine meaning. "Witness," says Walafried Strabo, "that alb denoting purity, that belt signifying continence, that stole obedience, and that flowing chasuble which is placed over all to denote charity, the greatest of all virtues ‡‡." The gloves of the bishop were put on to signify that his good works were sometimes to be in secret and not before men; and they were laid aside, to remind him that his light was to shine before men §§. The mystic sense of the pallium, symbol of unanimity, as Pope Symmachus styles it, writing to a bishop of Austria, in the year 504 ||||, and which ancient authors mention as being taken from the body of St Peter, that is to say, from the altar over his relics, and to which they ascribe the plenitude of the pontifical office ¶¶, is explained by Isidorus Pelusiota, in his

* Richard. Victorin. in Cantica Canticorum Prolog.
† Rationale Divin. Offic. ‡ De Ritibus Eccles. Cath.
§ Tractat. de Dedic. Eccles. || Gemma Animæ.
¶ De Sacramentis Eccles. Myst. atque Eccles. Ritibus.
** De Antiq. Eccles. Ritibus.
†† Benedict XIV. de Sacrificio Missæ, sect. 1. 54—62.
‡‡ De Ecclesiasticis Officiis, Lib. I. §§ Id. cap. 55.
|||| Germania Sacra, I. 7. ¶¶ Sicilia Sacra, I. 41.

epistle to Count Herminius. "The bishop," he says, "wears upon his shoulders a band, not of linen but of wool, to signify that he is an imitator of Christ, the great shepherd who carried on his shoulders the sheep which he had lost and found." In the same manner Simeon Gretserus interprets the omophorium *. The procession is the way to the celestial country. "He who ministers to others the light of good works is spiritually an acolyte," says Hugo of St. Victor †. Many usages and institutions will be unintelligible if we do not bear in mind their spiritual interpretation. Why, for example, was a church to be consecrated afresh if the altar had been moved, but only its walls washed with salt if the other parts of the building had been repaired after having fallen? Ives de Chartres explains this, by showing, that as the altar signified faith, its removal signified a loss of faith, which could only be repaired by a fresh reception of sacred mysteries; but the rest of the edifice when injured and repaired, was only to be washed with salt, to show that by tears and penance other sins were to be purged away. Thus, as he says, "whatever was done in the temple made with hands signified what ought to be done spiritually within us, that by the observance of visible sacraments we might be led to the knowledge and love of the invisible building ‡." It may be remarked generally, that the Church had nothing for mere ornament, but, like Nature, all her rites had regard to use as well as beauty. She loved symbols that were beautiful, but no unmeaning decorations. It is observable also, that a vast number of loving harmonies and sweet incidents, fruitful in sublime, poetical, and religious emotions, were produced by keeping this in mind, and doing things in consequence simply and spiritually, without attending to the part which was material, without any regard to formality, or fancied decorum, but just as the bare need of the occasion required.

As yet we have taken but a very cursory glance at the divine offices, and already we can perceive with what solemn majesty they were clothed, and how well they corresponded to that sentiment of beauty, under the re-

* In Codinum, Lib. I. c. 1.
† Speculum de Mysteriis Ecclesiæ, cap. 1.
‡ Ivonis Carnot. Epist. LXXX.

ligious feeling, which, in the unity of our life of perception, divides itself into the epic of inspiration, the dramatic of resignation, and the lyric of devotion. O how the soul is moved at that solemn harmony of holy song, at that anthem chaunted by a hundred voices, recurring with such irresistible precision, and with as much certainty as if ordained by some law of nature, at that instant rising of the tall lights, when the still sweet tone of the saintly orison solitarily ascends. So have I found it under the noble dome of Florence, where, on one side, stood the portrait of Dante, and in the centre the last work of Michael Angelo, the dead Christ in the arms of his mother,—sublime masterpiece! which death prevented him from finishing. "Omnes sitientes, venite ad aquas." The Church had many secrets to minister refreshment to the parched and fainting soul. Her silence had words—for, as St. Ambrose says, "Non solos Dominus audit loquentes qui audiebat Moysen tacentem. Plus audit tacitas cogitationes morum quam voces omnium *." What rapture in that lofty, that deep, that sweet, that divine silence, in which all injuries are forgotten—that admirable silence, as much superior to all harmony as the Divine darkness is more luminous than the sun and every other light in heaven †,—yielding at length only to that majestic voice, which comes to our ears, after the lapse of ages, through Moses, the rapt prophets, the Psalms and Gospel; and which, like the voice of God himself, "breaks the proud cedars, and makes the deserts tremble ‡." The divine office was not a mere rise and fall of organ sound, swelling and dying away under the Gothic arches, and causing solemn reverberations like those mountain echoes, which produce such a pleasing astonishment in the admirers of nature, who make journeys to hear waterfalls, or cannon fired under hanging rocks. In the Catholic Church, the divine office was a provision, not for the vague raptures of a wandering mind, but for the wants of the understanding, and, through the intelligence, for the necessities of the heart. At the farthest extremity of her vast temples, through the long and lofty aisles, the words of the psalm, of the antiphon, or the hymn, came to the ear loud and distinct:—and certainly, no harmony of instruments could equal the

* Lib. Offic. I. 41. † Tasso, Dialoghi ovvero della Pace.
‡ Psalm xxiii.

effect produced by that unearthly light of words which issued from the sanctuary.—How solemn, on entering beneath Ogygean vaults, to hear the loud solitary voice entoning from the choir, the first verse of a psalm—"Nisi Dominus ædificaverit domum"—which is then caught up by a multitude, in which laymen's voices mingle with the priests', eager to complete that sublime announcement.

Sometimes the Church, in her affliction, appears like a person become insensible through excess of sorrow, and reduced to a state in which the soul wishes to forget every thing but the counsels of eternal wisdom—as where she sings the tenebræ, and suddenly interrupts the chant of her particular sorrow, to break forth in that exclamation, expressing a general thought—"Blessed is the man who hath borne the yoke from his youth." What terrible sadness in those tones and words of the matins on Maunday Thursday—"Melius illi erat, si natus non fuisset?"—How awful and impressive are those tearful or joyful fragments which she is continually singing—the beauty of which was so keenly felt by Dante, as appears from his so often introducing a similar usage into his divine vision, like that prophet who begins with a conjunction, to whom were present those things which seem absent to our ignorance, and in whose mind interior and exterior things were so conjoined, as if he beheld both at the same time, so that his words were only a continuance of his inward thought. At one time you hear a voice saying, "Martinus adhuc catechumenus hac me veste contexit," at another, "Sancti mei, qui in carne positi certamen habuistis;" at another, "Media nocte clamor factus est;" at another, "Mea nox obscurum non habet, sed omnia in luce clarescunt:" and all the while there is on every side a crying,

> "Blessed Mary! pray for us.
> Michael and Peter! all ye saintly host*."

How conformable to the most intimate emotions of the human heart, is that frequent repetition of solemn and suppliant words, round which the mind seems desirous

* Dante, Purg. XIII.

of lingering, as if it could not be torn away from them. Without recurring to the repetitions which occur in the Psalms, and in other parts of holy Scripture, of which St. Hilary gives so profound an explanation, we can witness how true to nature is this feature of the liturgy, by referring to the ancient grave tragedians, where the chorus, in the Agamemnon of Æschylus, desires Clytemnestra to repeat what she has just announced respecting the fall of Troy—adding. "I should wish to hear those words continually, and to be filled with admiration while you repeat them again and again *." In the high lyric pathetic beauty of the hymns, we feel the true power of poesy; while that syllabic composition of song in Pindar's style imparts a tone of the utmost majesty to the triumphs of the poor. Some of the antiphons contain the last words of martyrs in their agony; others the memorable exclamations of confessors before kings; others the sentences of holy doctors, and the replies of saints, on occasions that are transmitted in the archives of history to everlasting renown. Such are those words, sung on the festival of St. Laurence—"Quo progrederis sine filio, Pater? Quo, sacerdos sancte, sine ministro properas?" Will you hear how the vilest instrument of torture can be made sublime by the confession of a martyr? Hear that fearful cry of the Church on the same great day—"In craticula te Deum non negavi, et ad ignem applicatus te Christum confessus sum." How impressive are those anthems, sung on the festival of the great advocate of Gaul—"Dixerunt discipuli ad beatum Martinum, cur nos, Pater, deseris?" and that—"Domine, si adhuc populo;"—those sung on St. Andrew's day, "O bona crux, quæ decorem et pulchritudinem de membris Domini suscepisti;" those on the feast of St. Clement, "Omnes una voce dixerunt: ora pro nobis, sancte Clemens:" those on St. Agatha's day, "Quis es tu qui venisti ad me curare vulnera mea? Ego sum Apostolus Christi," and those on St. Cecilia's day, which relate the visit of Valerianus to the catacombs on the Appian way, in search of St. Urban, who was there concealed? The antiphons on the festival of St. Lucia, at vespers, and in the office of the night and at lauds, bring us in presence of scenes so pathetic, so ineffably sweet and sad, that a youth-

* 318.

ful mind can make no comment upon them, unless by weeping. "In tua patientia possedisti animam tuam, Lucia sponsa Christi: odisti quæ in mundo sunt, et coruscas cum angelis: sanguine proprio inimicum vicisti." Can you hear what is sung without feeling the fountain of tears flow over? "Rogavi Dominum meum Jesum Christum, ut ignis iste non dominetur mei." Can you hear what follows without experiencing that chill which attends the sublime mysterious consolation? "Soror mea Lucia, virgo Deo devota, quid à me petis, quod ipsa poteris præstare continuo matri tuæ? Nam et fides tua illi subvenit et ecce salvata est." Can you hear, lastly, the song of triumph without falling upon your knees? "Benedico te, Pater domini mei Jesu Christi. Quia per filium tuum ignis extinctus est à latere meo?"

A modern poet, in his description of the first Christian society, when he introduces the evening prayer, can find no words more harmonious or noble, amidst his gracious and sublime picture, than those which the Church actually uses in her complin office—"Visita, quæsumus, Domine, habitationem istam:" and he observes, that through familiarity many are insensible to the beauty of this prayer. In fact, when any of these collects, or the words of some litany, which have a cry for every feeling of the heart, are placed by a poet in the midst of the most brilliant passage, there is no transition perceptible, no interruption to the beauty and majesty of the style; but the words of the Church seem the genuine effusion of the poet, in his happiest moment of inspiration. What majesty in those antique verses murmured by the priest—the force of which has been so often felt by hell! Witness those words in the office of the dedication, pronounced by the pontiff on first entering the Church, while with his crosier he traces the victorious sign upon the threshold: "Ecce signum crucis, fugiant phantasmata cuncta!" While many must have felt how the prayers of the Church are composed with attention to the sweets of harmonious cadence, there are perhaps few at present who remark sufficiently with what accurate precision they invariably agree with the most profound truths of philosophy, as well as with the mysteries of faith. Political science might be learned from her prayers for princes and for all the faithful—as when, amidst the joy of the paschal solemnities, she prays that God may enable

his people to attain to perfect liberty *:—and physiological researches might be furthered by a close attention to the words of her various supplications. Nor can we overlook the undeviating consistency and the strict adherence to definite principles, which characterise all expressions in the divine office. Of this, Hugo of St. Victor may supply an instance. "The spirit of itself," he says, "is termed spirit—and in connexion with the body it is called soul. The human soul, because it can exist both in the body and out of it, is called, in the ecclesiastic offices, soul and spirit. Therefore," he says, "the holy Church, which believes most faithfully in the resurrection of the flesh, prays not only for the spirit, but also for the souls of the faithful †."

Well, indeed, on every consideration, may these be styled angelic offices. In the grand painting in the Church of St. Dominick at Bologna, St. Thomas—himself rather an angel than a man, one of those, of whom the whole course of the world's history can hardly produce two or three examples—is represented writing the Lauda Sion from the dictation of angels, whose beaming countenances are reflected in his looks. Of the hymn, "Gloria in excelsis," the writers of the middle age simply say, "This was begun by the angels and finished by doctors of the Church."—"Prima hujus hymni verba e cœlo ad nos angelorum voce derivata sunt," says Cardinal Bona. —"Cætera quis addiderit incertum est ‡."

The origin of the hymn on Palm Sunday, "gloria, laus, et honor tibi sit, rex Christe redemptor," is thus related. "Theodulph, Bishop of Orleans, being falsely accused and imprisoned by the Emperor Lewis, son of Charlemagne, in a tower at Angers, on Palm Sunday the procession passed by the prison, when he opening his casement and making silence, entoned these verses of his own composition. The Emperor, who was present, was so pleased, that he ordered him to be released, and restored to his see, and from that day these verses were sung in the procession §."

Time and words would both fail me if I attempted to point out all the beauty and beatific influence of the various

* Easter Monday. † Allegor. in Marcum, Lib. III.
‡ Benedict. XIV. Rer. Liturg. Lib. II. cap. 4.
§ Durand. Rationale, Lib. VI. c. 67.

forms of devotion practised in the Church. Only let the litanies of our Blessed Lady, of Jesus, and of the Saints, which are sung in every region of the earth, be recalled to memory,—only let it be considered how they express the feelings with which hastening shepherds and adoring kings in Bethany must have beheld the virgin mother of the Divine infant,—that the symbolical titles given to her in accordance with the usages of sacred Scripture, can inspire the loftiest and purest conceptions of grace almighty,—that a soul which is enlightened by the Divine intelligence, discovers and feels within herself things which can never be expressed, except in symbolic language,—that the love for Jesus can only dictate short seraphic praises, and ardent desires to supplicate his power,—that those adopted in reference to Mary, besides their intrinsic beauty, are sanctified by the innumerable holy persons who have used them from age to age, in life and death,—how the litany of the saints transports us into the presence of all the great and good that have adorned the Church in past time—the apostles, evangelists, martyrs, confessors, monks, hermits, virgins, widows, and all the saints of God,—how it raises up their image before the mind's eye,—how it carries us into the colosseum of Pagan Rome, into the catacombs, into the deserts of Thebaid, into the caves of the mountains and forests, into the cells and monasteries of the middle age, and finally, into the confines of the ineffable presence of the elect in glory!—how, returning to ourselves, it reminds us of every evil to be shunned in the passage of mortal life, and of every good to be desired,—how it instructs, elevates, and ravishes the soul,—only let this be considered, and I think, in a mind most prejudiced with a prejudicating humour, these will all be found in excellency fruitful.

The corrections which some men, in modern times, have proposed in the offices, only furnish an additional evidence that they had no profound sentiment of religious truth, and that even those few mysteries of faith which they profess outwardly, have never been, as with Catholics, transfused into their very souls. Such is the necessary inference to be drawn from that substitution which was invented of the term Redemptor for Regina in the hymn "Salve Regina;" for, to no Catholic would such words ever occur in addressing his Redeemer as to say that to him he had recourse in the sorrows of

his pilgrimage, since he knows at least, by faith, that his life should be Christ, and that he should live in Christ; but to his blessed mother he turns in sighing and sorrowing in this vale of tears. Sooth, when one hears the moderns propose to modify or alter what the Church has ordained, one might think it enough to answer them in the words of Beatrice to Dante, when she beheld him terrified at the shout of spirits in Paradise—

> ——"Knowest not thou thou art in heav'n?
> And knowest not thou, whatever is in heav'n
> Is holy; and that nothing there is done
> But is done zealously and well *?"

One whose lore has been by genius guided may be warmed with somewhat of Mercutio's zeal when he hears certain lisping, affecting fantasticoes, new tuners of accents, fashion-mongers, speaking on such subjects, as if any fluent phrase-man were competent to correct the liturgy of the Catholic Church; and one who is of intelligence profound may indulge a smile at their expense; for these pretended clear and exact speakers, like Euripides, are sure to be convicted of absolute error when they have an Æschylus for their judge; but the milder and gentler ascetic, to whom piety imparts the privilege of genius without its dangers, will be content with observing that prayer, by its very nature, must be mysterious, and that they who approach God with ardent devotion, must have very different notions of what is fitting language, from others, who, with unmoved affections, would draw towards him scientifically with their lips alone; consequently, that it is wrong to criticise pieces of this kind, since one ought rather to respect them as mystic words which comprise a spiritual sense, and which are so many testimonies of the sublimity of the state to which their authors were raised.

The moderns pride themselves on certain studied compositions which they seem to consider perfect models of prayer. Certainly no one can object to these forms on the ground of their not being sufficiently clear, as far as the words themselves are concerned, which are very precise; or of their omissions, for every want that can be conceived is specified; but it may be doubted whether

* Parad. XXII.

they would have sounded religious, or even wise, to our ancestors, who were very averse to the use of long wordy narrations in addressing God, and who even considered it an indication of the divine spirit when nothing nominally was sought in prayer *. "That kind of supplication," says Hugo of St. Victor, "which consists in merely accumulating epithets, such as misericordia mea, refugium meum, susceptor meus, liberator meus, and so on, is so much the more full of internal delight as it is imperfect in external expression; for affection has this property, that the more fervent it is within, the less can it be developed externally by the voice. And whatever be the words we use, the nearer devotion approaches to humility, the more acceptable is it to God. In no way is God more effectually bent to hear us than when the mind of the supplicant is wholly converted to him with affection. And, therefore, whatever be the words of supplication, they are never absurd if they are only calculated to excite the affection of the supplicant to love God, or, what is still better, if they demonstrate that he is already kindled with his love†". Nor is this all, the Doctors of the middle age had learned with the author of the Angelic Hierarchy, that as negations in divinity are often true affirmations, so to the obscurity of mysteries, a manifestation by means of dissimilar forms is more adapted ‡, and that divine and celestial things are often beautifully expressed by dissimilar symbols. Hence, as Hugo of St. Victor thinks, oxen, lions, eagles, horses, wheels, chariots, thrones, roses, towers, gates, stars, and similar figures are introduced, which, in the estimation of those who only regard external things, are ridiculous, but to those who think piously and profoundly, they are far otherwise; for besides that from all material and bodily forms, figures may be taken to represent the incorporeal splendours of a spiritual nature, it is certain that the very dissimilitude of the symbol conduces to express the excellence of the supernal object; for dissimilar figures, more than similar emblems, lead the mind from material and bodily things, and prevent it from resting in them. Every figure, therefore, so much more evidently demonstrates truth in proportion as by its

* Card. Bona, de Discretione Spirituum, cap. 8.
† De Modo Orandi libellus.
‡ Dionys. Hierarch. cap. 2.

dissimilitude it is clearly a figure and not the truth, and the more unlike is the figure, so much the more does it lead the mind to truth, preventing it from resting in the similitude. Therefore the wisdom of holy theologians wonderfully descends to the use of indecorous similitudes, not permitting our material carnal sense, so in love with matter, to rest in material images, but compelling it to pass on in search of other things more fair and true, and by the very baseness of the image, purging the intellectual power of the soul from all admixture with images, in order that purely and simply it may be led to contemplate spiritual and invisible things *. Moreover, to any one who reflects, it is evident that a prayer of any length which is to be often repeated, must not be a studied, smooth composition, like a narrative arranged according to the rules of rhetorick, for besides that mere rhetorical effect, however sublime may be the emotion resulting from it, can never satisfy the religious ideal, such an attempt would argue an ignorance of the inevitable impotence of human language to approach what is due to the perfections of God, and the wiser heart would disdain the presumptuous effort of the understanding. After the first effervescence, all this froth of eloquence, and this inflated wisdom, would be converted into dregs, such as would excite rather loathing than kindle devotion; but as a philosopher remarks, when we have employed the loftiest hyperboles, and exhausted all the figures of symbolic language, when we have dressed metaphysical abstractions in poetic raptures, when we have ransacked whatever things are most excellent among the creatures, and having defecated them and piled them up together, have made that heap but a rise to take our soaring flight from, when instructed as well as inflamed and transported by that inaccessible light which is inhabited by what we adore, we seem raised and elevated above all that is mortal, and say things that surpass the intelligence of men, we can for ever open our lips in such strains of prayer, because, although, these expressions otherwise applied would be hyperboles, and though they do not express the object, they yet proclaim the fervour of our devotion, and declare not, indeed, what God is, but how much we honour him.

* Hugo Victorin. Annotat. in Cœlest. Hierarch.

No, the prayers of the church were composed by saints, and what is more, were used by saints and men of the interior life, of intuitive aesthetic ideas, as some philosophers would say, and they knew what they were about; or, rather, they wrote from the inspiration of Him who made and knew what was in man. The human heart during many generations has responded to the chord which they alone knew how to touch. Not from a trivial popular erudition, nor from the school of grammarians, nor from the tribune of rhetoricians, but from a sense and contempt of human things, from a profound care and investigation of wisdom, from a deep consideration of their own misery, and of the divine mercy, did they descend to compose these sacred offices.

The church, it is true, has endeavoured to protect the faithful in the possession of her prayers, unmixed with other inventions, by prohibiting all new litanies in the public worship, excepting with such restrictions as one might hope would be generally sufficient to discourage all attempts of this kind; but it is, perhaps, still rather to be wished than expected, that these modern writers, who never question but that they are in the van of what is termed the march of intelligence, should cease from exercising their talents in this way; for, generally, in proportion to the poverty and ignorance of the mind, there will be a passion for changing and modifying ancient things. Impelled by a desire to do something, a shallow, conceited, restless intelligence will seek to distinguish itself by reforming, as it pretends, the reliques of a less enlightened age; and, indeed, it would almost seem, as if in a certain stage of society, taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, had a greater charm for the cultivated class than the noblest sentences of a Chrysostom, or than the most majestic symbol of the Catholic liturgy.

But to return. Wondrous is the skill with which the church in her offices blends together the ancient testament and the new, the figures and the reality, the promise and the accomplishment, and shows in the infinite variety of her forms, the profound unity of the Christian faith. She speaks, she sings herself. All these voices of prophets, evangelists, fathers, doctors, hymnographers, form a magnificent concert in which no dissonance wounds the ear, but all is one spirit and one inspiration, and

amidst a warmth, an enthusiasm, a tenderness, an astonishing comprehension of the great characters of the Christian mysteries, and above all, a firm, profound, and wondrously communicative faith.

Admirably has the church evinced her judgment with regard to that greatest of difficulties which used to be treated of by the ancient philosophers, the observing of what the Greeks termed πρέπον, the decorum of the Latins. This is evinced in every part of the divine offices and ritual, in which the order of words is suited to the authority, the age, the condition, the place, and the time which are involved. Reader, I dare not give the reins to my discourse as we approach certain confines. Truly, with respect to them, it would be well to return to the ancient discipline of secrecy and the use of doubtful words, which was observed during so many ages, even after the liberty of the church had been accomplished. It is well, like Orestes, to have learned from the purifications with which one has sought to remedy his evils, to know when to speak and when to be silent*. I would walk lightly here. The very ground seems to bleed and suffer. A great mystery is taking place. I see death and passion, and one is more inclined to weep than to admire; but thus much I may observe, as one who to a single ear imparts his thought, that the sublime poetry of the opening dialogue of the holy Mass has been remarked by many great authors. This dialogue says one, "is a true lyric poem between the priest and the catechumen. The former, full of days and experience, groans over the miseries of man, for whom he is about to offer sacrifice. The latter, full of youth and hope, sings the victim by whom he is to be redeemed." When the vaults of our churches resound with the joyful melody of O filii et filiæ, what heart does not burn at hearing "the King of glory rises from the tomb! who is this angel clothed in white seated at the entrance of the sepulchre? Apostles hasten! happy are those who have believed and have not seen!" Would not this simple chaunt of the church bear a comparison with the grandest creation of poetry? Does it not verify the saying of the ancients, that men are winged by means of words, for by these sublime words is not the soul lifted up, and is not the man raised?

Witness again the prose of Easter, Victimæ Paschali

* Eumenid. 276.

laudes. Behold how this song of triumph is lively, rapid, how it carries one with it, how in a few lines it invites to joy, relates the great combat, apostrophises Mary Magdalen as a witness, and makes an act of faith and of prayer to the victorious Christ. "If that be not the genius of lyric poetry," says a French critic, alluding to it, "I know not what is."

But where should one finish if one were to speak of the "lauda Sion," the "adoro te supplex," the "stabat mater," the "dies iræ?" If one were to describe the office of the dead, with its mournful lessons, its awful remembrances, its solemn and heart-piercing tones? When to this majestic poetry and sound, is added the aspect of one of our Gothic churches by night, lighted up, notwithstanding its vastness, so that every mullion of the highest windows of the choir can be traced with all its beauteous tracery against the darkness of the exterior sky, while only the distant vaults of the nave and transepts fly away and bury themselves in mysterious obscurity, as I have seen the sublime Cathedral of Amiens on the night of All-hallows, when the vigils of the dead were sung there, at which an immense multitude assisted till a late hour in profound devotion,—assuredly the impression from the whole on all minds of ordinary susceptibility must be such as no language can adequately describe; it must be like that resulting from some great event of which the memory is indelible. "Let one only represent to himself," says Michelet, "the effect of the lights on those prodigious monuments when the clergy moved in procession through those forests of columns, animating the dark masses, passing and repassing through the long aisles, under those complicated arches, with its rich vestments, its tapers, and its chants, when light and sound of unearthly harmony issued from the choir, while the ocean of people responded from the shade below;—there was the true drama, the true mystery, the representation of the journey of humanity through the three worlds, that sublime vision which Dante has immortalized in the 'Divina Commedia.'" And on all occasions too what a beauty of solemn form surrounds one in the Church? Those shrines with sacred burning lamps in order long; those altars bright with a tall forest of burning tapers, casting streams of tremulous lustre like the matin star; those banners that move on in bright procession; those angel forms bearing the lights; those lofty things

which come so slowly moving towards us, that the bride would have outstript them on her bridal day*—how does all this purify and exalt the imagination? Can we wonder that it should have seemed to our feeling ancestors like the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven, prepared as a spouse adorned for her husband, that they should have expected to hear that great voice from the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he will be their God? See those beautiful little chapels of our Lady or of the Patron Saint on each side of the nave, where every object is so admirable and delicate that those who assist within may imagine themselves to be in a paradise. There amidst these bright symbols, from this cloud of fragrant incense, sweetly rises the day to Catholic youth, and no marvel that the remaining hours should flow on in innocence and joy. No marvel, I say, that the Church, as she desires in her prayer, should receive spiritual augmentation from what she gains in material space, and that an eternal habitation for the majesty of God, of living and chosen stones, should be prepared out of the supplicant people. Look again, and let your eyes rest upon those children, who stand or kneel clad in white robes, and with lights in their hands, so like things enskyed and sainted, so expressive of purity, of obedience, and love, that if angels were to descend visibly, one concludes that assuredly it would be in such a form. Fix them still upon that altar and mark what is passing before it. How beautiful is every thing! how serene! as if the harmonious wisdom of the Church had actually moulded the external form of matter to its own perfection. Is not here that beauty manifested which Plato said was nothing but the splendour of truth? Catholicism has produced all the lovely forms which order can assume within the narrow limits of space and time. Mark the celestial habits and the reverence of the grave wearers. O the sacrifice! how ceremonious, solemn, and unearthly it is in the offering! It fills one's breast with the emotions described by Dante, when, after telling of the sweet strains of Paradise, he adds,—

* Dante, Purg. XXIX.

> "And what I saw was equal ecstasy;
> One universal smile it seem'd of all things;
> Joy past compare; gladness unutterable;
> Imperishable life of peace and love;
> Exhaustless riches and unmeasur'd bliss*."

These impressions are not only thus profound and inspiring, but they are also durable, for to the mind that has once experienced them, all external beauty ever afterwards seems to be only a homage to the mystery of divine love. Every object in nature seems to merit the appellation which the Church applies to the element in the benediction of her fonts, "hæc sancta et innocens creatura;" and, in some way or other, serves to bring the mind in presence of those mysteries which are the fountain of all joy. The separation between spirit and matter is thus removed, and all seems resolved into the unity of an harmonious creation, of which every part is good, so passing lovely, mind cannot follow it, nor words express its infinite sweetness.

But let us investigate these things with unmoved bosom, as one who only chronicles the past. The altar erected by Angelbert, Archbishop of Milan, in the year 830, in the Ambrosian Basilica, was valued at thirty thousand pieces of gold. The whole front was composed of solid gold, studded with innumerable jewels, and over it stood twelve images of silver gilt, representing the Apostles†. That in the Basilica of St. Mark, at Venice, was composed of alabaster and porphyry, and tablets studded with precious stones‡. Yet every church possessed what Ughelli mentions in describing the Cathedral of Naples, festive coverings for solemn days, which could add beauty even to these altars of gold and jewels§. What must have been the splendour on extraordinary occasions when more than usual magnificence was required? The writers of the middle ages, to describe a person struck mute and made forgetful of every thing by one object, say that they felt an impression like that caused by the sight of a high altar at Easter or Christmas; for on these occasions, the Church displayed all

* Parad. XXVII.
‡ Id. V. 1177.
† Italia Sacra, Tom. IV. 82.
§ Id. VI. 669.

her treasures in honour of God, and the people used to offer choice flowers and costly vases for receiving them. Then were used those choral elephantine books of such magnitude and weight that it exceeded the strength of a man to support one of them, and of such rich adornment, that they used to be preserved in treasuries, wonderful specimens of art and industry, whether we consider the exquisite loveliness of the painting, the admirable beauty of the writing, or the costly and superb decoration of the exterior. In that vast and well filled choir of the dome at Florence, a light darkened on all sides but one, streams upon the huge volume over which it is suspended, which seems then from the distant parts of the nave, like one great flame in that solemn assembly, as if it were literally illuminated by that mighty book. The ancient sacerdotal vestments, besides the general distinctions of colour, frequently bore in rich embroidery, either a representation of the mystery of the particular festival on which they were used, or as those in the monastic Church of the Escurial, an image of some saint or of the instrument of his martyrdom, in order to commemorate a patron or local founder. Generally from those white vestments denoting the unsullied lustre of a mystic and immortal joy, to those which are red from the memory of human evils, we can trace the same genius, the same delicacy of conception which designed the ornaments in the stone of the Gothic portal. A chasuble was like the rich splendour of a rose or tulip leaf. The Creator saw man in making the former only imitating his own art. Yet these gave offence to the moderns; as if God who has painted the flowers of the field, and clothed the beasts and fowls of the earth, with such curious and exquisite colours, could be offended at the beauteous vestments of the priest who adores him, who assumes them with prayer, and trembling, and who wears them only out of humble reverence. Many details are extant respecting the pomp of worship in the middle ages. It would seem from an expression of Ives de Chartres, that out of reverence for our Lord, the chalice and paten were generally of solid gold, for he requires that, at least, they should be of silver *. In the church of Monte Casino there were

* Decret. Pars II. c. 131.

seven greater, and five lesser chalices of pure gold *; but Saba, in his Testament, speaks of silver chalices gilt which he had brought with him from Greece, for the church of St. Saviano at Messana, to which he also gave three most beautiful thuribles which he had purchased from certain Greeks †. In a document of the eleventh century, we read of books bound in gold, and of gold chalices adorned with admirable gems, with an abundance of various inestimably precious ornaments for divine worship which had been treasured up from ancient times in the great church of Salzburg ‡. On two expositors and a ciborium of pure gold, there were reckoned upwards of three thousand of the most precious stones of rare magnitude: one of the expositors wrought with images, was moulded by Archbishop Eberhard de Neunhause, and cast, according to popular report, from a treasure found in Inberg §. In the Cathedral of Naples, in the eighth century, the holy vessels of the altar were of solid gold. Those in St. Mark's Basilica, at Venice, were also of gold covered with gems. Ughelli says, that to describe the sacred ornaments, vestments, and other riches in the church of St. Justina at Padua, would require a volume ||. We read of the ancient church at Durham, that in the processions, the prior had a marvellous rich cope of cloth of gold, which he was not able to walk upright with, for the weightiness thereof, but one held it up on every side. On one vestment only of Loretto they counted seven thousand jewels. In the ecclesiastical annals of Sicily, we read of vestments in the churches of Palermo covered with innumerable pearls ¶. In an ancient manuscript, which describes the destruction of Catana, by the eruption of Mount Ætna, in the year 1169, in which fifteen thousand persons, including the bishop, and a number of the monastic flock perished, the loss of the ecclesiastical ornaments was deemed a part of the calamity not unworthy of commemoration.

> "Unde superbit homo? Deus una diruit hora
> Turres, ornatus, vestes, cunctosque paratus **."

* Chron. Casinensis, Lib. III. cap. 74.
† Sicilia Sacra, II. 1005.
‡ Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 181.
§ Id. 1065.
|| Italia Sacra, V. 422; VI. 65.
¶ Sicilia Sacra, I.
** Id. Tom. I. 531.

Florence could send forth nothing in costliness or beauty superior to those which were procured from her for the Abbey of Westminster, some of which still clothe on solemn days the worthy successors in the priesthood of England. Frequently it happens in this island, that ancient tombs of pontiffs and abbots are broken open, and invariably we find the vestments of the richest texture and of the most beauteous design. Forty persons worked continually during three years under the conduct of Lermino, a celebrated embroiderer, making vestments for the Cathedral of Strasbourg. This was in a later age, but an enumeration of the gifts of Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Casino, to the church of that monastery, will convey an idea of the prodigious splendour of public worship in the tenth century *. In consequence of that profusion of jewels which adorned the altars, as we remarked in a former book, and which is found again here in surveying the vestments and other ornaments employed in the solemn worship, mineralogical studies were then much cultivated. Thus Petrus Diaconus wrote a book, "De Generibus Lapidum Pretiosorum," which he dedicated to the Emperor Conrad, and he translated from Greek into Latin, the book of Heva, King of Arabia, on precious stones, addressed to the Emperor Nero, and which the Emperor Constantine had removed from Rome to Constantinople †. Mention has been made of the fragrant odour which filled the holy place on which men need not disdain to philosophize; for who has not experienced the associations connected with it? To how many minds does it recall the sweetest years of mortal existence, the recollections of youth, and the thousand circumstances of early life, which derive such a secret charm from the solemn and beautiful ceremonies of the sacred choir? "More good may be drawn from odours than is drawn," says Montaign, "for I have often perceived that they change me, and act upon my spirits, which makes me approve of what is said respecting the use of incense and perfumes in churches, which is to gladden, excite, and purify the sense, to render us more fit for contemplation." An affecting allusion to this usage of the Church is

* Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. Lib. III. c. 20.
† Chronic. Casinens. Lib. IV. cap. 66.

often met with in the great ascetical writers. "O most benign Lord Jesu Christ," cries one of them, "my consolation and refuge in all my trials and tribulation! O that thou wouldest deign, with celestial light and attending angels, to enter the house of my mind, and from a golden thurible filled with aromatics, to incense all my interior, and to consecrate my heart as a temple of the Holy Ghost, to sign it with the holy cross, to anoint it with the oil of grace, to place there the golden urn with manna, and to attach to my side fixedly the book of thy law, that in that I may study celestial things, and thy divine commandments day and night, so long as I shall be an exile on the earth*."

Incense, which was used in the Jewish, is of great antiquity in the Christian Church, and it is mentioned with honour in the Scriptures, where it is compared to prayer, of which it is still a symbol.—Light was always regarded as a mysterious emblem. Clemens Alexandrinus thinks that man was called by the ancients φῶς, from the same word signifying light †. The lamps and candelabras, of curious workmanship, which were found in the sacred cemeteries of Rome, attest the usage which prevailed in the earliest times at the celebration of the Christian mysteries ‡. In the middle ages, the lights in churches were an occasion of wonderful magnificence. We read that, in the time of Charlemagne, in the church of the monastery of Ania, there was a multitude of lamps of pure silver, in the form of a crown, which used to be lighted with oil on the festivals, which so illuminated the choir, that in the night the whole church was as light as in the day; and before the altar there were suspended seven lamps of the most beautiful and astonishing workmanship §. Pope Adrian I. in the same age, gave to the church of St. Peter a candelabra, which held, without confusion, thirteen hundred and seventy tapers or lamps. The crowns and chains from which lights were suspended, were often of pure gold or silver ¶. Two great crowns of

* Thomas a Kempis, Sermonum Pars III. 2.

† Pæd. Lib. I. c. 6.

‡ P. Aringhi Roma Subterranea, p. 282.

§ Vita S. Benedicti Abb. Mabillon, Acta S. Ord. Bened. IV. 1.

¶ Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis, in cap. 26, notæ.

silver, from which were suspended thirty-six lamps, hung without the choir before the cross, in the church of Monte Casino *. There were there twelve towers of light called Phari, as if to shine over the ocean. Fortunatus, Patriarch of Grao, in the seventh century, gave two crowns of light to the church of that island, which had been desert till the year 565, when Christians first sought an asylum there from the Longobards. In each of these burned an hundred candles †.

Nor was it only during the celebration of the sacred offices that symbolic lights burned; they were maintained perpetually, night and day, before the blessed sacrament, before the images, and before the shrines of the saints;—and a reference to wills, and other documents of the middle age, shows with what zeal devout persons contributed to the expense incurred by them, leaving often their lands to the church for this express purpose. "Pale lamp of the sanctuary," exclaims a French poet, "why, in the obscurity of the holy place, unperceived and solitary, consumest thou thyself before God? It is not to direct the wing of prayer or of love, to give light, feeble spark! to the eye of Him who made the day. It is not to dispel darkness from the steps of his adorers. The vast nave is only more obscure before thy distant glimmering. And yet, symbolic lamp, thou guardest thy immortal fire, and under the breeze of basilicas, thou dost flicker before every altar, and mine eyes love to rest suspended on this ærial hearth, and I say to them, whom I comprehend not, ye pious flames, ye do well. Perhaps, bright particles of the immense creation, they imitate before his throne the eternal adoration. Is it thus, say I to my soul, that, from the shade of this lower place, thou burnest, a flame invisible in presence of thy God? In the night of the sensible world, I feel that there is a point inaccessible to the obscurity of earth, a dawn on the hills, which will watch all the night long—a star which never sets—a fire which remains unextinguished, unconsumed, in which incense can be at all times enkindled, to ascend in fragrance to heaven."

The procession with litanies was a solemn symbol, employed in the ecclesiastical offices from remote an-

* Chronic. Casinensis, Lib. III. c. 33.
† Italia Sacra, Tom. V. 1101.

tiquity, as may be proved from Tertullian. In the first ages, churches were constructed with aisles for the processions, as expressly and constantly as with a sanctuary for the celebration of the eucharist.—

> " Densa triumphali video procul agmina pompa,
> Atque hilares placidosque choros.
> Plurima pars niveis, variis pars altera fulget
> Vestibus, auratisque stolis.
> Jam sinuosa leves rapuerunt stemmata venti,
> Jamque micant pia signa crucis.
> Tartareas Christi propellit imago phalanges,
> Et superi properant cives.
> Ordo sacerdotum venerandaque turba canoris
> Carminibus passim exultant.
> Jam devota sacris operitur scena viretis,
> Jam sanctæ resonant voces.
> Alternis precibus pueri, innuptæque puellæ,
> Atque senes, juvenesque canunt *."

Dante is reminded of such things on beholding a tribe of spirits in the other world :—

> ——— " Such their step as walk
> Quires, chanting solemn litanies on earth."

Behold that solemn procession through the aisles of the Abbey Church of St. Germain! The holy virgins in pure white robes, like very sanctity, and bearing bright tapers in their hands; crowds of holy laymen, the noble, and the mechanic, side by side, alike humble, alike devout; the saintly students, the venerable clergy, slowly moving along, singing their pensive melody through the dusky space, shedding radiance as they pass along, while all around them lies in deep darkness. What an emblem is here of the path of the just through earth's short pilgrimage. O, it is an impressive thing to mark the countenance of each one who glides before you. There are some who walk, rapt like men in sleep, unconscious of all around them, conversant solely with the internal vision, in a rapture of angelic thought. Nicolas Flamel, whom we have so often had occasion to mention as constantly employing painters and carvers to adorn places

* Card. Bona, de Divina Psalmodia, 289.

in Paris with devout figures and inscriptions, caused to be represented, on the cemetery of the Holy Innocents, a procession in sculpture, under which was written,

> " Moult plaist à Dieu procession,
> S'elle est faite en dévotion."

During the ages of faith, the procession was considered an institution of no small importance, in an intellectual and spiritual point of view. Before those mystic flames, which seem to be mingled with the supernal luminaries, —emblems of that star which never sets—it was thought that the delusive meteors of corrupt passion would die away, and be no more seen. That pious crowd, still increasing as it proceeded, which passed on, walking in such humble guise after the blessed sacrament, was in sooth a sublime spectacle, as exhibiting to the eye of the world a multitude of men who sought to follow their celestial King, hungering and thirsting after him. " Isti sunt viri sancti, facti amici Dei," is the involuntary testimony of all who behold them. Such were the conquerors and friends of God, who, despising the orders of triumphant princes, deserved eternal recompense.

Whether this ghostly triumph—so venerable, from the associations connected with it, so inspiring, from the solemn truths which it symbolically shadowed forth—conduced to sanctify and illuminate the heart, no one, who worthily joined in it, was ever found disposed to question. It was while thus slowly moving along, step by step, with the multitude of believers, having the eyes bent upon the ground, and the ears charmed with an unearthly melody, that men felt their minds impressed with a new sense of the mysterious and supernatural side of life. Then it was that they meditated on the eternal years, contrasted with the little space that remained to them of that mortal existence, the approaching end of which seemed to be proclaimed by the very stones beneath their feet. The earth on which they trod seemed to utter the Homeric lesson,

οἵη περ φύλλων γενεὴ, τοιήδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν *.

Processions besides these, universally observed by the

* Il. VI. 146.

Church, used to be celebrated in particular places, in consequence of the foundations made by private devotion. At Caen it being the custom for every trader in the market to give a penny to God, or more, according to his devotion, each trade selected one member every year, who was to receive this money, and on the day of Pentecost there was made a solemn procession of all the trades, from the Church of St. Peter to the Church of St. Nicholas, and each bore a great taper, to which was attached as many crowns as had been received from that trade in the course of the year, in order, by this public display, to excite the people to mercy and charity to the poor; and after making the circuit of the church and cemetery of St. Nicholas, the procession was to return in the same order, and the tapers were then to be given up to the Hôtel Dieu *."—In the year 1412, at the general procession of the Holy Innocents, there were a hundred thousand Parisians who walked barefooted.—So dear to men in the middle ages were these affecting solemnities, that we find them observed even in camps, between the contending hosts. The description which Tasso gives of the procession before the walls of Jerusalem, is taken from historical facts. Here first the clergy are seen leading the van, followed by the mighty duke, walking alone, after the manner of princes; then come the barons and knights, two by two, all chanting the litany, invoking the blessed Trinity, and Christ's dear mother and St. John, the holy angels with the elected twelve, the martyrs, confessors, and those whose writings teach the certain path that leads to heavenly bliss, and hermits also, with cloistered nuns, who pray upon their beads. Singing thus with easy pace, thus ordered they pass along—while the deep caves and hollow mounts give round about them a thousand echoes.—

" It seem'd some choir, that sung with art and skill,
Dwelt in those savage dens and shady ground;
For, oft resounded from the banks, they hear
The name of Christ and of his mother dear.

* De Bourgueville Recherches et Antiquitez de Normandie, Liv. II. 40.

Upon the walls, the Pagans, old and young,
Stood hush'd and still, amated and amazed
At their grave order and their humble song;
At their strange pomp and customs new they gazed:
And when the show they had beholden long,
An hideous yell the wicked miscreants raised,
That with vile blasphemies the mountains hoar,
The woods, the waters, and the valleys roar.
But yet with sacred notes the hosts proceed,
Though blasphemies they hear and cursed things:
So with Apollo's harp Pan tunes his reed,
So adders hiss where Philomela sings.
Nor flying darts nor stones the Christians dread,
Nor arrows shot, nor quarries cast from slings;
But with assured faith, as dreading naught,
The holy work begun to end they brought *."

With respect to the material grandeur of these spectacles, some idea may be formed by those who have visited Catholic countries even in our times. At the procession in Milan on St. Charles's day, several vast antique crucifixes, of solid silver, covered with gold and jewels, and vast candlesticks, of gothic and most exquisite workmanship, are borne along. In the year 1191, took place the consecration of the Church of St. Mary de Flumine, at Ferentinum, which is a town in old Latium, upon a hill near the Latin way. In the procession were borne numerous lighted torches, twenty silver thuribles, twelve silver crosses, and four reliquaries †. To observe what a sense was generally entertained of the symbolic meaning of the procession, we should peruse the ancient writings, and the discourses which were on such occasions addressed to the people, many of which contain passages of extraordinary beauty. "Interior processions we should always make," says Richard of St. Victor, "but chiefly in this solemnity which is presented before us ‡." St. Bernard speaks as follows:—

"The procession which we are about to celebrate, supplies us with many subjects for remark. We are this day about to celebrate a procession, and shortly after it we shall hear the passion. What means this strange conjunction, or what were our Fathers' thoughts in

* XI. 11. † Italia Sacra, I. 675.
‡ Sermo in Die Paschæ.

adding the passion to the procession? For the procession represents what was done this day, and why is the passion added which did not follow till the sixth feria? Wisely is the passion added to the procession, that we may learn to place no confidence in any joy of this world, since sorrow is the end of gladness, and that our prosperity may not slay us like fools, but that in prosperous we may be mindful of evil days, as also conversely. For the present scene is mixed with both, not only to secular men, but also to spiritual. Therefore, we have to imitate our Lord's humility in the procession, and his patience in the passion. But why did our Lord wish to have the procession, when he knew that his passion would so soon follow? Perhaps, that the passion might be more bitter which had been preceded by the procession. O! what a contrast between 'tolle, tolle, crucifige eum;' and 'Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, osanna in excelsis.' What a contrast between 'King of Israel,' and 'We have no king, but Cæsar.' What a contrast between the green branches and the cross, between the flowers and the thorns; between strewing their own vestments for him, and stripping him of his own and casting lots for them! And now in this procession to-day there are those who go before, those who follow our Lord, and those who walk by his side. The first are they who prepare the way for the Lord to your hearts, who guide you and direct your steps in the way of peace. The second are those who, being conscious of their own weakness, follow devoutly and tread in the footsteps of those that walk before. The third, who adhere to his side, are those who chose the best part, who live only to God, and consider his pleasure. But behold all are in the procession of our Lord, and no one sees his face; for those who go before are engaged in preparing the way, solicitous about the dangers of others, and they who follow cannot by any means see his face. Those who are at his side can sometimes see him, but only by glances and not constantly or fully, so long as they are on the way. Thus it must be, for no man shall see me and live. I shall not be seen, he says, in this life; no one shall see my face in this way, in this procession. Therefore, may he of his goodness enable us so to persevere in his procession while we live, that in that great procession when he will be received with all that are his by God the Fa-

ther, we may deserve to enter the holy city with him, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen *." Again, on the festival of the Purification, he speaks of the procession thus. "In the procession of this day, we shall walk two by two as a sign of fraternal charity and social life. A solitary person intruding himself would disturb the procession, and trouble both himself and others, symbolical of those who separate themselves, caring not to observe the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We shall all carry lighted tapers in our hands, lighted from the holy fire of the altar, and these represent good works; and that humility may be practised, the last are first, and the first last in the procession, for the boys and those of least honour are to walk before. And in the procession no one can stand still, but all must continue to move forwards as in the way of life, where nothing can remain in the same state †." Thus speaks Bernard, and thus through his lips speak the ages of blessed thirst, so that this solemn walk of choirs was grateful alike to understanding and to sense.

CHAPTER IV.

After considering the divine symbolism of the sacred offices, we are naturally led to philosophize respecting the ecclesiastical music which was found such sweet medicine to moderate the thirst of human souls, and prepare them for the refreshing streams of justice. Music, like painting as a fine art, is a new art, for as we owe perspective painting and the infinite exaltation of the modern over the ancient art to the paintings of the Catholic Church, so we are indebted to the ecclesiastical musicians for harmony. Approach we now to contemplate altars bright with amarant and gold, and vaults that breathe ambrosial fragrance, and holy words

* Dominic. in Ramis Pal. Serm. II.

† Id. in Purificat. Serm. II.

that in the blessed spirits elect, sense of new joy ineffable diffuse, and sacred song that wakens rapture high; no voice exempt, no voice but well can join melodious part, such concord is in faith. In all ages men have been convinced that music was a thing divine and belonging to the worship of God. Maximus of Tyre enforces this doctrine *. Strabo says, that music is the work of God †. Pythagoras, that he might keep his mind always imbued with the divinity, used always to sing and play on the harp before going to rest, and in the morning. He also ascribed importance to it in respect of education ‡. Socrates, when of venerable age, did not disdain to learn the principles of music with boys. Plutarch, who calls it the universal science §, says, that the Lacedemonians paid more regard to music than to their food. The music of the ancients, which began in temples, was regarded as the source of civilization. Plato and Aristotle maintained that music was an essential part of the education of youth ||. Plotinus thought that by music men were led to God. Quinctilian says, that music is conjoined with the knowledge of divine things, that the wisest men were studious of music, and that it formed part of the education of youth from the days of Chiron and Achilles to that time ¶. Cicero observes the general opinion of the Greeks, that the highest erudition was in music, so that Epaminondas the prince, he says, of Greece, was skilled in playing upon the lute and in singing, and Themistocles when he declined to play at a banquet was considered on that account less learned. Whoever was ignorant of music was regarded as deficient in learning **. The early fathers remarked the excellence of music in its adaptation to the human soul. "The science of music," says St. Augustin, "is probably the science of moving well the mind ††." "To sing and to chant psalms," saith he, "is the business of lovers ‡‡." "Nothing," says St. Chrysostom, "so exalts the mind and gives it as it were wings, so delivers it from the earth, and loosens it from the bonds of the body, so inspires it with the love of wisdom, and fills it

* XXI. † Lib. X. Geograph. ‡ Jamblich. 15.
§ Lib. de Music. || Conviv. de Legibus, VII. Politic.
¶ Lib. I. 10. ** Tuscul. I. 2.
†† Lib. I. de Musico. ‡‡ Serm. 33.

with such disdain for the things of this life as the melody of verses and the sweetness of holy song *." The vague indetermined mysterious character of music defies all exact interpretation, but for that very reason it admirably represents the interior man. Whether it throws the soul into a revery full of noble melancholy, or into an enthusiastic rapture, no art harmonizes so marvellously with the sentiment and idea of infinity, and with the relations of God and man. "Music, like poetry, is a longing desire which charms and even seizes upon the soul with a magical power. In music," continues Frederick Schlegel, "as in other arts, the higher and the earthly, like soul and body, are bound to one another. The heavenly longing desire and the earthly are often inseparably blended together in one tone, as is the case also with all the first sentiments of youth †." How beautifully does Shakspeare represent the effect of even the lightest music upon minds contemplative, in the scene between Amiens and Jacques, when the former repeats that song which begins with

> "Under the greenwood tree,
> Who loves to lie with me,
> And tune his merry note,
> Unto the sweet bird's throat."

And Jacques says, immediately, "More, I pr'ythee more." "It will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jacques," replies Amiens. "I thank it," cries his friend. "More, I pr'ythee more. I can make any song yield melancholy. More, I pr'ythee more." Still the other is loath. "My voice is rugged, I know it cannot please you." The answer is the same. "I do not desire you to please me; I do desire you to sing; come more; another stanza." The philosophers of the middle age think it not too much to affirm that a love of music has a connection with a love of justice; for the pleasure of music arises from finding that every thing moves according to order, and that there is no disarrangement or discord. In fact, as Novalis says, "All enjoyment is musical ‡," and for the same reason, since the original thirst of man is for justice.

* Hom. in Ps. 41. † Philosophie der Sprache, 124.
‡ Schriften, II.

Great were observed to be the effects of music. St. Albertus, a monk, while he was a secular in the world, being present at a certain play with its music respecting the life and conversation of St. Theobald, was suddenly by divine grace so filled with compunction, that he began from that hour to lead a life of great sanctity *. St. Ansbertus, a monk, and Bishop of Rouen, while as yet a layman, and living in the court of the king, hearing some instruments of music said within himself, "O glorious Creator, what will it be to hear that song of the angels who love thee, which is to sound for ever in the celestial courts! How sweet and admirable will be that chorus of saints when you ordain that the sounds of a mortal voice, and the skill of human instruments, should be able to excite the minds of the hearers to praise thee devoutly, their God and Creator." When I was at Rome, I heard a young and noble Englishman, a man of blessed life, and now of saintly order, express the same feelings on hearing music in the street. Gerard says of St. Adalhard, Abbot of Corby, that he was constantly of such a sweet intention towards God, that if while assisting at the royal councils he heard melody, he had it not in his power to refrain from tears; for all sweet music seemed to remind him of the sweetness of his celestial country †. St. Dunstan, while a youth, withdrew from the world to devote himself to music, and to the meditation of celestial harmony ‡. "They who love God," says St. John Climacus, "are excited by secular and spiritual songs and melody to joy, and divine love, and to tears, although they who are addicted to pleasure may collect from them matter of perdition for themselves §. Osbert, in his life of St. Dunstan, relates that the holy archbishop had recalled many from the turbulent affairs of the world by means of his musical science. Brother Pacific, one of the first disciples of St. Francis, had been celebrated while in the world for his musical science, and the holy Father employed him to instruct the other brethren in singing the hymn of the Sun, which he had composed in honour of God; for he wished that they should always sing it after their sermons, and that they

* Surius, 7 Aprilis.

† Vita S. Adalhardi. Mabillon Acta S. Ord. Bened. Sæc. IV. p. 1.

‡ Osbert, Monachus Cantuar. in ejus vita. § Grad. XV.

should tell the people they were God's musicians, and that they wished no other payment for their music but to behold them doing penance for their sins. Grievous enmity existed between the bishop and the governor of Assitium. St. Francis deputed two of his friars to present themselves before the governor, and invite him on his part to repair, with as many persons as he could collect, to the bishop's house, whither he had deputed two others to apprize the bishop. When all were assembled, the friars said, "Lords and brethren, beloved in Jesus Christ,—Father Francis being prevented by sickness from coming here in person, has sent us here to sing a canticle which he has composed, and he implores you to listen to it devoutly." Then they commenced this song, to which St. Francis had added a strophe appropriate to the occasion. The governor heard them with hands joined, and eyes raised to heaven, weeping. When they had finished, he professed his desire to be reconciled with the bishop, who on his side only lamented that he had not been the first to show an example of humility. Then they embraced and kissed each other, mutually demanding forgiveness, and filling the beholders with wonder and joy *.

"Music," says Cassiodorus, "dispels sorrow, soothes anger, softens cruelty, excites to activity, sanctifies the quiet of vigils, recalls men from shameful love to chastity, by the sweetest rapture expels the diseases of the mind, and soothes, through the medium of the corporeal senses, the incorporeal soul †." They who would dwell on this subject, may consult Clemens Alexandrinus ‡; Justin Martyr §; Bede ‖; John of Salisbury ¶, who pays a tribute to the noble nature and admirable properties of music; Williams of Paris **; and Athanasius Kircher Fuldensis ††. Many and interesting are the reflections of the ancients with respect to the principles and application of music. Plutarch explains a saying of antiquity, "Love taught music ‡‡," on the ground adopted by the Platonists, who taught that love was the master of all arts and

* Les Chroniques des Freres Mineurs. Liv. I. c. 116.
† Lib. II. Var Ep. 40.
‡ Stromat. VI.
§ Qu. 107.
‖ Lib de Musica.
¶ Lib. I. c. 6, Policrat.
** De Universo, Pars II. cap. 20.
†† Lib. III. Artis Magnetica.
‡‡ Sympos. Lib. I.

sciences. Theophrastus says that music has three principles—"grief, pleasure, and the divine inspiration." If our space were not too limited, one would be tempted to collect some interesting details respecting the different kinds of ancient music, and the use to which each was deemed applicable. It appears that the Dorian, which corresponded with our church music generally, was deemed proper for the education of youth; that the Hypodorian, which seems to answer more particularly to our vesper strains, was rather soothing; and therefore the Pythagoreans used it in the evening to appease the cares of the mind, though Aristotle styles it magnificent, constant, and grave *. It was called Hypodorian as being not greatly Dorian. The Phrygian music was martial †; and, what is very remarkable, both Plato and Aristotle interdicted its use to youth. The Hypophrygian was adulatory and attractive, and suited to unstable minds. Aristotle says that its effects are like intoxication ‡. The Lydian was the music of pleasure; and yet such is the inherent dignity of man's soul, from which nothing can totally banish the remembrance of its fall, that, as Plato asserted, it was sad and plaintive §. It was this which was said to resound in the Elysian fields ||. So associated is melancholy with the highest joy, that the Hypolydian was decidedly tearful, and said to arise from devotion and gladness; the Mixolydian produced a double effect, for it excited men to joy, but immediately recalled them to sadness. It was this which the ancients used in tragedy. These seven tones were all recognized by the Pythagoreans ¶. In accordance with St. Augustin and the early Fathers, St. Thomas, and all the noble geniuses of the middle age, are the faithful echo of the ancients, and agree with their opinion respecting the divine origin of music. The importance attached to it in the middle ages, may be collected from various contemporary authors, such as Rabanus Maurus **; Isidore ††; Rupertus Abbas ‡‡; an author mistaken for Bede; and Richard of St. Victor §§. Vincent of Beau-

* See 19th Problem.
† Clemens Alex. Strom. VI.
‡ See 19th Problem.
§ III. de Repub.
|| Propert. Lib. IV. Eleg. VII.
¶ Card. Bona, de Divina Psalmodia, 431.
** De Inst. Clerical. III. 24.
†† Origin. Lib. II.
‡‡ In Lib. Reg. v. 23.
§§ De Contemplat. v. 17.

vais says that music is joined not only to speculation, but also to morality, for that there is nothing so proper to humanity as to be affected by it, and that no age is exempt from its influence *; and John of Fulda says, that all the Roman Pontiffs were either musicians or men who delighted in music. Raban goes so far as to say, "This discipline is so noble and so useful, that he who is without it cannot properly fulfil the ecclesiastical office. —'Quicquid enim, (he adds,) in lectionibus decenter pronunciatur, ac quicquid de psalmis suaviter in ecclesia modulatur, hujus disciplinæ scientia ita temperatur, et non solum per hanc legimus et psallimus in ecclesia, immo omne servitium Dei rite implemus.' For musical discipline," he continues, "is diffused through all the arts of our life in this manner. First, if we keep the commandments of our Creator, and with pure minds observe his law; for it is proved that whatever we speak, or with whatever sentiment we are internally moved by the pulsation of veins, is associated by musical rythm with the virtues of harmony. If we observe a good conversation, we prove ourselves associated with this discipline; but when we act sinfully, we have no music†."—"Sine musica," says Isidore, "nulla disciplina potest esse perfecta: nihil enim est sine illa ‡." In the middle ages, kings had their musicians, great nobles their musicians, towns their musicians. Music was deemed part of liberal erudition. It was treated upon by Boethius, Severinus, Berno, Otho, St. Gregory the Great, Theogerus, Cosmas, St. John Damascenus, Guido of Arezzo, and many others §. In the fourth century, the ecclesiastical music became more artificial than it had been in the infant Church ||; but it was St. Gregory the Great who was the chief author or promoter of the choral song, called from him Gregorian or Roman, which was propagated throughout the whole western Church. This, which was richer and more variegated than the ancient Gallican psalmody, was a precious remnant of the ancient Greek music, which had retained much of its original

* Speculum Doctrinale, Lib. XVIII. cap. 2.
† De Institutione Clericorum, Lib. III. cap. 24.
‡ Etymolog Lib. III.
§ Gerbert, de Cantu et Musica Sacra Præfat.
|| Id. Tom. I. p. 240.

beauty. St. Gregory founded a school expressly to teach it, and compiled books with notes to perpetuate it. We find musical skill, joined with exact judgment in divine mysteries, reckoned among the qualities of Leo II. Bishop of Palermo, in the seventh century *. During St. Gregory's time, the choral song was introduced into England by St. Augustin, as John the Deacon relates. Bede is a witness that, in the monasteries of Britain, the divine office was sung as in St. Peter's at Rome †. St. Theodore of Canterbury and St. Wilfrid of York were great patrons of this Gregorian song. In the year 747, in the Council of Cloveshoe, there were decrees for its especial cultivation. Charlemagne, who loved every kind of excellence, endeavoured also to promote it throughout the empire, being anxious, as he said, that the Latins should yield in nothing to the Greeks. He was passionately fond of the ecclesiastical chant, and used to sing himself in the church, morning, noon, and night, but only in an under tone, as Eginhard relates. The school of Metz, for ecclesiastical song, had flourished under Pepin. Charlemagne sent two clerks to Rome, that on their return to Metz they might be able to teach the Roman song. From Metz it was propagated over all France.

The names of some celebrated musicians of this time have come down to us. And modern writers, like Sir John Hawkins, though Protestants, pay profound homage to the genius of those ancient monks and bishops who were the conservators of music during so long an interval ‡.

Notwithstanding this extraordinary zeal for the cultivation of music, the relative importance of virtues was not overlooked. Charlemagne condemns some who prefer a clerk or monk that sings well to one that lives justly and holily. For though, he adds, musical discipline is not to be despised, yet if both merits cannot be obtained, it seems more tolerable to us to bear imperfection in singing than imperfection in living §. In the tenth century, music was in the highest repute. The greatest masters,

* Sicilia Sacra, notit. I. 37.

† Lib. IV. de Gest. Angl. c. 18.

‡ General Hist. of the Science and Practice of Music.

§ Capital. II. An. 811. Baluz. Tom. I.

such as Remi of Auxerre, Hubald of St. Amand, Gerbert, and Abbon, taught it with as much care as the highest science. "Est decus humanæ naturæ musica summum, quam qui scire negat, ipsum se scire negabit," says a manuscript poem in the Vatican, written in the time of Otho the Great. In England, celebrated for musical science were St. Adelm in the eighth and St. Dunstan in the tenth century, Eadmer a chanter of the Church of Canterbury, in the time of St. Anselm, Simeon at Durham, Joannes Thannatensis, a great mathematician, at Canterbury, Wolston at Winchester, Thomas Walshingham at St. Albans, William Somerset, in the monastery of Malmsbury, and William of Evereux, treasurer of Henry I. In France, the musical science was celebrated of Geoffrey of Tours, St. Odo of Cluny, Peter, chanter and doctor of the University of Paris, and Adulphus, raised from being a chanter to the episcopal see of Autun, an example not unfrequent in history. Pope Urban IV. in the thirteenth century, had been educated among the children of the choir of a cathedral; and Lebeuf mentions a certain cardinal who had risen from the same condition in the church of Lyons. Ordéric Vitalis says that the Abbot Durandus, having a great knowledge of music, enriched the divine office with new pieces, and with new and very melodious airs. In Ireland there seems to have been no regular ecclesiastical chant introduced till the twelfth century. St. Bernard says that St. Malachy was the first to establish it there, "according to the custom of the whole world." John the Monk, of Fulda, a disciple of Rabun Maur, was a poet and musician, "who first composed, with varied modulation, artificial song in the church in Germany—a country in which it took such deep root, that in no other part of Europe was it more assiduously cultivated." Mabillon, in his Itinerary, speaks of the great importance which the Germans attached to music in the church; whereas, he says, the French in his time regard figured music as an impediment to devotion. But it was an obscure and devout recluse who prepared a new epoch in the history of music. This was Guido of Arezzo, a Benedictine monk of the Abbey of Pomposa, in the Duchy of Ferrara, who, in the eleventh century, was the author of the present system of musical notes, for which he was so greatly honoured, that Pope John XX. sent

three messengers to invite him to come to him. He published his Micrologus about the year 1028. In a contemporary work he is entitled "Musicus et monachus, nec non eremita beandus."—In the prologue to his work, and in his letter to Michael, he speaks of the success of his invention with great humility. "Since my natural condition, and the imitation of the good, made me diligent, I began, among other studies, to instruct boys in music. At length the divine grace was with me, and some of them, by the use of our notes, learned, within the space of a month, to sing at sight new and most difficult pieces, so that it furnished a spectacle to many. —Since posterity will be able, with the greatest ease, to learn the ecclesiastical chant, which cost me and all before me so much pains, I trust that I and you, and the others who assisted me, may obtain eternal salvation, and, by the mercy of God, remission of our sins, or at least, some prayers from the charity of so many. For if they used to intercede with God so devoutly for their masters, from whom they could scarcely, in ten years, obtain an imperfect knowledge of singing, how will they not pray for us and for our assistants, who in the space of a year, or at the most, within two years, can make them perfect singers."

With respect to the merits of the music of the middle ages, it is certain that it had arrived at a very high degree of perfection. The love of God can supply and surpass all things. The most sublime elevation to which the soul can attain, becomes also, in relation to art, an inexhaustible source of celestial inspiration; for that which is most admirable in music, is derived from the sentiment of religion. In comparison, therefore, with the productions of the old Catholic school, modern science must stand mute. What, in fact, can any secular academy do to encourage music, comparable to a church, where the voices of three thousand faithful are to mingle in the hymn of lofty praises, which is to be heard with ravishment by the glorified choirs of heaven? On this ground, the importance of the musical schools which were in cathedrals, where children were instructed, has been pointed out by recent authors *. Truly, it would

* Sur l'Origine de la Maîtrise des Enfans de Chœur de la Basilique Metrop. de Paris. Mag. Encyclop. Tom. V.

require a different tongue from mine to speak of all the musical beauties in the sacred offices. The plain chant in the Holy Week, irresistibly affects the soul with a sadness unutterable. That of the "Stabat," places the blessed Mary before our eyes as if with the pencil of Raphael; that of the "Miserere," moves the soul to its centre; that of the funeral office, is terrific like the voice of death, sublime like the angel's announcement of resurrection. The admirers of the wonders of art flock to the Sextine Chapel, at Rome, to behold the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo, but in every country of the world, one may turn pale with fear and admiration before a still greater work, a composition of still more marvellous energy, before the "dies iræ," which is sung over the dead man's bier. "If a musician were asked to compose a piece without accompaniment, without either rythm or modulation, and to confide the execution to the rude voice of some parish singer, and on these conditions to create the sublime, where," says a modern French critic, "is there an artist that would accept the wager? Nevertheless, this is what has been realized by some poor monks, whose names have not even come down to us, but in whom faith and piety have been able to accomplish what genius would not have had courage to attempt."

The religious houses have always proved themselves the asylums of the Muse. Jomelli, Gluck, and Mozart, sought advice in music from the Franciscan friar, Martini, of Bologna, who formed a musical library of seventeen hundred volumes, and who is said amidst modern corruptions to have preserved in his compositions all the dignity of the ancient style. The music as well as the poetry of the Catholic Church seem like a faint echo of that primitive language in which man spoke to God in the state of innocence, the sounds of which can revive in some manner those powers of sentiment and virtue, which the Creator placed in his heart. In the middle ages, men were scrupulous in adhering to the great traditions of art in the composition of music. Thus Letaldus says of himself, on composing music for the feast of St. Julian, that "he was unwilling to depart from the similitude of the ancient song, lest he should produce either a barbarous or a novel melody. For the novelty of those musicians does not please me, he adds," speaking like

Plato, "who make use of such dissimilitudes that they seem to disdain to follow the old authors." To the same effect speaks Hugo of St. Victor, "Non enim decet, ut cantus et usus ecclesiasticus fieri debeat secundum arbitrium diversorum, sed firmiter servandus est secundum scripta et instituta majorum." The Psalms of David were tuned to that Dorian harmony which sounded forth in the hymn of Terpander, the antiquity of which music is remarked by Clemens Alexandrinus*; and as Muller observes, a manly character was always attributed even to the Dorian dialect. St. Bernard, in his letter to the Abbot Ærremacens, describes what ought to be the style of Church music, "full of gravity, being neither lascivious, nor rustic. Sweet without being frivolous, soothing to the ear, but so as also to move the heart. It should appease sadness, mitigate anger, and not diminish but fecundate the sense of the words." There was no affectation or levity in the ecclesiastical music of the middle ages. "With the canticles and hymns of the Church," says Cardinal Bona, "we console this solitude of our exile until we come to our celestial country, when we shall sing that new immortal song, without any mixture of grief." For at present as there are no joys without some misery, so, as the Abbot Paschasius Radbertus says, "there is no song found without lamentation: for songs of pure joy belong to the heavenly Sion, but lamentations to this our pilgrimage." The Church was so impressed with a sense of the importance of music being adapted to the Catholic philosophy, that all music composed by heretics was prohibited from being used in the Church by a synod in the year 1567. In fact, Catholic music is the sister of Catholic manners. It is the expression of faith, hope, and charity: it is the voice of penance, of simplicity, and love. However rich, however ravishing. this was its essential character. What musicians were those who composed the sublime masses which raised souls to heaven, in which the music consisted entirely in a simple phrase of the chaunt in an artless and even popular air, but which, directed by all powerful harmony to suit the different parts of the mass, could express so many various passions! At the "kyrie," those of submission and pity; at the "gloria in excelsis,"

* Stromat. VI. 11.

those of admiration; at the "passus," suffering; at the "resurrexit," joy; at the "agnus Dei," gratitude and peace. These were the inspirations of men in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a Dufai de Chimai, a Binchois de Paris, an Ockeghem of Bavaria, a Leteinturier of Nivelle, a Josquin of Cambray. These great musicians of the school of Cambray, instructed all the north of France. Artificial skill is not art. The moderns, as a German philosopher remarks, "have cultivated more and more the luxury of harmonic accompaniments and instrumental concord, but only to promote the phantastic interest of a confused entertainment. The best judges sigh after the simple elevation of the ancient style, and recognise their chief masters in the first composers of the old simple harmonies of the Church *." Under the inspiration of faith, art was a great and holy thing. It was the reflection of God. It was the invisible world, the soul world. Palestrina and Mozart composed figured music equal in solemnity and feeling to the noblest tones of the Gregorian chant. They created melodies which should never be sung excepting on one's knees: the beautiful simplicity of the ancient Church chants so struck Purcell when he began to study them, that he exclaimed, "surely this must have been composed at the gates of heaven, where is such melody, as but to hear, for highest merit were an ample meed †." Under the influence of Catholicism, poetry and music sent forth sounds such as the ear of man had never before heard. Sooth no tongue can be adequate to give an idea of the impression produced by the plain song of the choir. It is full of poetry, full of history, full of sanctity. While the Gregorian chant rises, you seem to hear the whole Catholic Church behind you responding. It exhales, says Genéroult, a perfume of Christianity, an odour of penitence, and of compunction, which overcome you. No one cries how admirable! but by degrees the return of those monotonous melodies penetrates one, and as it were impregnates the soul; and if to these be added personal recollections a little sad, one feels oneself weep, without ever dreaming of judging, or of appreciating, or of learning the airs which one hears. In respect to art, one may pronounce without hesitation, that men such as

* Fries. 241. † Dante, Par. XIV.

Æschylus describes, who never in their hands bear the olive branch, having lost the faculty of prayer, the thrilling emotion in presence of the Father and Creator of the world, who, in short experience nothing but ordinary sensations when they hear the chants of the Church, must be degraded beings, insensible to the magnificence of nature, deaf to the nightingale or to the murmur of the woods, dead to poesy and to music, and susceptible of no enthusiasm, (man must desire something with ardour) but for objects disgusting and absurd.

Organs, whether hydraulic or pneumatic, were nearly the only instruments used in the churches in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, all others being rejected in consequence of abuse and the fear of theatrical effect *. Some writers, among whom was our Œlred of Rievaulx †, complained of excess in the use of organs, though in the same age, Peter the Venerable, of Cluny, was defending the use of them against the Petrobrusians. The sacred Psalmist had expressly desired men to take up the harp and the cymbal, which judgment was more than sufficient to counterbalance the opinion of isolated philosophers. St. Augustin had lamented the blindness of the Manichæans in rejecting sacred music, saying, "that they knew not these medicines, and that they rage against the antidote by which they might be healed." The first organ which appeared in Europe was sent as a present by Constantine Copronymus, to Pepin, King of France, in the year 757. This was placed by him in the church of St. Corneille, at Compiègne. The secret of the construction of these steam organs is now entirely lost. The first organ on the present principle which was seen in the west, was that which Louis-le-Débonnaire placed in the church of Aix-la-Chapelle. It is an organ of this kind which is mentioned in the annals of Fulda, in the year 828. At the close of the ninth century many skilful organ builders were drawn to Rome by Pope John VIII. In the tenth century, an organ of this description was placed in the Abbey of Westminster. Walafried Strabo, describing the church of Aix-la-Chapelle, mentions a surprising instance of the effect of the wonderful organ which was in it; for he says, that a

* Gerbert de Cantu Sacra, Tom. II. 99.
† Specul. Charitatis, Lib. II. cap. 23.

woman expired through rapture and surprise at the sweetness of its sound.

> " Dulce melos tantum vanas deludere mentes
> Cœpit, ut una suis decedens sensibus, ipsam
> Femina perdiderit vocum dulcedine vitam."

This organ was made by George, a priest of Venice and by a Count Baldric. So delicious and astonishing was the music of organs and flutes, at the consecration of the monastic church of Cava, near Salerno, which was conducted with the utmost pomp, that what between the harmony and the sweet odours which were continually burning, the Serene Duke Roger, and all the people present, thought themselves on the very borders of heaven, as is attested by the chronicle in the archives of that house *. In the tenth century, organs used to be supplied from Italy, as appears from the epistles of Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II. The organ in the church of Brunswick was made by Arnold, a priest of the order of St. Francis, and that in the monastery of Trudbert, in the Black Forest, was made by Conrad Sittinger, a Benedictine monk of St. Blaise. As these instruments were made by religious men, so were they chastely touched by their pious and master hands.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was the custom to place the organ in the choir; but in the fifteenth century it was deemed preferable to remove them to the western extremity of the nave. The expression of golden mass, "aurea missa," which occurs in the books of the middle ages, implied a mass which was celebrated with extraordinary magnificence. This used to last three or four hours, in consequence of the music †. Of these solemnities, Dante is reminded when borne along by Beatrice over the waters of Lethe, and led to the symbol of our Saviour:

> " The blessed shore approaching, there was heard
> So sweetly, ' Tu asperges me,' that I
> May not remember, much less tell the sound ‡,"

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* Italia Sacra, VII. 368.

† Gerbert de Cantu Sacra, Tom. I. 354. ‡ Purg. XXXI.

alluding to the prelude of scattering the holy water, which usage has been always in the Church from apostolic tradition *, following the example of Elijah the prophet, who is recorded to have mingled salt with water, that with this infusion the bitter fountains might be converted into sweet †. Admirable was the adaptation of the different strains to the successive stages of the sacred mystery. Rupertus says, that the gradual used to be sung in lugubrious tones by men, and that this was followed by children singing in a sweet and joyous manner the Allelujah in a continued strain, protracting a short word, as it is not strange that the human voice should fail in speaking, where the mind does not suffice for thinking. This was so ordained he says, to express the consolation which awaited mourners according to the sentence, "Beati qui lugent quoniam ipsi consolabuntur;" for this joyful Allelujah carries away the astonished mind, and directs it to that place where will be always life without death, and day without night. The sequence was that breathing or protracting of short words to denote a joy which was greater than one could express. Hence in the ancient sequences, we find unknown words, because, as Cardinal Hugo says, the manner of praising God in our country is unknown to us. But the proses sung before the Gospel, which date from the tenth century, were also called sequences, because the Gospel followed them. The music at the offertory continued while the oblations were received, and until the "Per omnia sæcula," was chanted by the priest. The Mixolydian song of the preface, which shall be sung long as time endures, is the same as what is found in the most ancient monuments. After the "Sanctus," the choir, or as it was sometimes called, "the school," was silent. This custom prevailed in the time of St. Chrysostom, for he says, that at the consecration all was silence, πολλὴ ἡσυχία, πολλὴ σιγή. This is the moment when the priest is left alone at the altar, the deacon and subdeacon falling back, to signify, as Durandus says, how the disciples forsook Christ and fled ‡. "The silence which follows the 'Sanctus,'" says Stephanus Augusto-

* Joan. Devot. Lib. II. tit. VII. §. 1.
† Hugo de St. Victor de Sacramentis, Lib. II. P. IX. c. 2.
‡ Rationale, Lib. IV. cap. 34.

dunensis, indicates the commemoration of the Passion;" and Rupertus says, "After the joyful acclamation of the people there follows the history of secret grief, which is a cause for profound silence. At the fraction of the Lord's body, the agnus dei, and the dona nobis pacem were solemnly sung by the choir, and at the communion the sweetest strains of hypolydian harmony were protracted, in order, as the writers of the middle ages say, that the minds of the people who were about to receive the Lord's body might be exalted and tranquillized: or according to the words of a manuscript of the tenth century, "that the faithful about to communicate may inhale, in harmony, him whom they receive within their lips, that they may remember, that he whom they feed upon as corporal food, was crucified dead and buried." For this cause the music continues, that so long as the people are receiving the celestial benediction, their minds, by the charm of melody, may be retained in a state of sweet imprisonment. Finally, the deacon was to chant the Ite missa est, in a wondrous and a melodious note, in order, as it were, with the last hand to impress on the hearts of the people the memory of what they had seen and heard *. What a profound sense does all this indicate of the reverence due to the celebration of those tremendous mysteries in which God has placed the fountain of all holiness!

Such then was the ecclesiastical music during the middle ages, till the commencement of its decline, which, according to the natural order of things, was contemporaneous with the decline of faith and the introduction of the new opinions; for a change of manners necessarily superinduced a change in the style of music. In the fifteenth century a profane theatrical music began to be introduced into churches, which was censured by Pope Benedict XIV, in his encyclical letter in the year of the jubilee, and again in his works, in which he called upon all bishops to correct this abuse. Martin Gerbert, a Benedictine monk of the monastery of St. Blaise, in the black forest, composed his great work on sacred music, expressly with a view to stem, if possible, this deplorable evil, which he laments in language of piety and good sense. This abuse of church music gave great scandal at its com-

* Rupertus Tuitieensis de Div. Off. lib. II.

mencement, as may be seen in the writings of Cornelius Agrippa, Erasmus, and others. It arrived at such a height, that the fathers of the Council of Trent deliberated whether they ought not to abolish all music in the churches excepting the Gregorian. Satan seemed to have again crept into the paradise of man on earth, the house of God. The chants were left to profane untonsured artists, who substituted a hypophrygian style, consisting of fanciful digressions and exaggerated bombastic flourishes for the ancient simplicity, the dignity of the priesthood, and the reverence of God. Anthems were sacrificed to exhibit the fantastic powers of vain men, who knew nothing of devotion, and who very often were persons who, by the canons, stood excluded from so much as entering the assembly of the faithful. False character, false expression, and frivolity, under the title of brilliant execution, became the prevailing vices of music. This Phrygian, or hypophrygian music, full of insolent grandeur, noisy, tedious, and abounding in insipid repetitions, adulatory and suited to unstable minds, indicated clearly enough the influence of the new spirit which had superseded the reign of faith and Catholic devotion, and might have made men desire even the Lydian strains of the ancients, which, though their music of pleasure, had still, as we have before remarked, the character of sorrow and compassion.

The abuse of organs was strictly prohibited, though in more recent times it has outstript all bounds. St. Charles Borromeo prescribed, that although the organ may be used in hymns, yet every verse is to be distinctly pronounced in the choir *; that in like manner the credo was not to be performed alternately by the choir and by the organ, but that all of it was to be sung †. At the Synod of Treves, it was required that the organ should be silent at the elevation; and according to the Synod of Cologne, one of the questions to be proposed by the visitors of churches was, "Whether the organ was silent at the elevation." Generally it was enjoined that no verses should be intercepted, and no hymns mutilated by the organ. The pontifical chapel at Rome, to the pre-

* Concil. Mediol. I. p. 2. N. 51.
† Concil. Rhemense, an. 1564.

sent day, has constantly rejected the use of organs, as have some ancient churches, such as that of Lyons, and some religious orders, such as that of the Carthusians.

Sweet and intellectual was the harmony of youthful and aged voices joining in saintly chorus, worthy to be of angels heard; but sudden bursts of deafening noise, large floods of sound, mechanically sent forth in impetuous streams, would seem less in accordance with the still small peaceful voice of heaven.

CHAPTER V.

We have seen the importance ascribed to music generally by the great philosophers of the middle age: but let us now attend to what they deliver in its praise, when directed in particular to enhance the solemnity of the ecclesiastical offices.

"It is good," says St. Bernard, "to glorify God with hymns, and psalms, and spiritual songs. The church chant rejoices the minds of men, refreshes the weary, invites sinners to lamentation; for although the heart of secular men may be hard, yet immediately when they hear the sweetness of psalms, they are converted to a love of piety." Dante seems to express this when he describes his hearing in purgatory the strains of dulcet symphony:

> ——— "Then the ice
> Congealed about my bosom, turn'd itself
> To spirit and water, and with anguish forth
> Gush'd, through the lips and eyelids from the heart *."

St. Isidore of Spain speaks to the same effect, recommending music, that those who are not moved to compunction by words, may be excited by the sweetness of melody; for, he adds, quoting the words of St. Augustin,

"all our affections have I know not what certain occult connection with diversity or novelty of sounds;" and St. Thomas proves the advantage of music on the same ground *. Of St. Adelard, abbot of Corby, it is related in Bollandus †, that whenever he used to hear a sweeter music in the divine office, he could not refrain from tears. St. Bernard relates that St. Malachy used often to say how greatly he was delighted by the chant which he heard in the monastery of Clairvaux. For even in these austere houses of penitence the graces of music were cultivated and appreciated. In the chronicle of the monastery of St. Trudo, it is related how Guntram, when first admitted as a youth into the choir, on the night of the conversion of St. Paul, filled the whole community with astonishment, unmixed with envy, at the sweetness and power of his voice; and with what humility he stood forth, at the command of the abbot, to sing the response which belonged to the office of another, who was of high dignity, which he executed with such power that the abbot, immediately after the office, appointed him to the second place in the choir ‡. "The reading and meditation of the scriptures, and the devout chant of psalmody," says Richard of St. Victor, "strengthen the mind and render the weak firm §." Vain is the censure and most shallow the judgment of the moderns, when they say that the poor cannot understand the regular offices. "When men hear sacred song," says St. Thomas, "although they may not understand the words which are sung, yet they understand for what purpose they are sung, namely, to praise God, and this is sufficient to excite devotion ||." That ignorance of the poor can hardly be so great an evil, since Dante describes his having experienced it in paradise:

> "Unearthly was the hymn which then arose:
> I understood it not, nor to the end
> Endured the harmony."

And in fact, who has not marked the profound impression which the solemn tones of the Gregorian chant make upon the multitude in Catholic lands?—the mystic

* 2. 2. 9, 91. Art. 2. † T. I. Jan. ad diem XI.
‡ Apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. II. 661.
§ In Cantica Cantic. c. II. || Serm. 2. 2. 9. 91. Art. 2.

joy with which it is sung by children, like holy innocents, and by old men, who have in their looks an expression which seems to tell that they know what takes place in paradise? It is not by learning that men can qualify their souls for the reception of that heavenly peace which this holy song visibly inspires. Truly the words of David thus loudly and articulately announced in the majestic Latin of the vulgate, seem an unearthly voice, teaching the wisdom of the eternal ages. Each word makes every heart vibrate as it unfolds the thousand mysteries of human thought, and the secrets of the conscience of man. How this divine voice enables us to see from on high and without fear, all the shocks which make weak mortals tremble, and which drag so often to the abyss, individuals and nations! Oh, who is not moved by the oracular sentence of the psalmist? Amidst the regrets, the agonies, the discouragements of life, who has not felt the power of that great voice which speaks in the depth of night, which touches and which consoles? These Latin psalms and hymns, so sweetly and solemnly sung in the daily offices of the church, in which all classes joined, diffused a complete tone and spirit through society in the middle ages; so that the spirit of the psalms, and the spirit of the Gregorian song, became the spirit of the times. It is one thing, as the character of modern ages can testify, to read these things in a library, and it is quite another to hear them announced in majestic strains under the holy vaults of those churches which no one that has a heart can ever enter without veneration and trembling.

The most familiar office was always new, for the events of the world and the vicissitudes of each man's fortune, every day throw a fresh light upon the words of this eternal wisdom, so that their profound sense seemed never exhausted, but was continually receiving further illustration by the crimes and follies, by the calamities and by the virtues of men; for in the psalms every thing is foreseen and set at rest on its true foundation, even down to the calamities and sophisms of the time we live in. Homer says of his hero, "He was suffering cruel wounds from a diseased heart, but he found a remedy, for sitting down beneath a lofty rock, looking down upon the sea, he sang as follows*."—If the aspect of rocks and the sound

* Il. VI.

of the waves could inspire consolatory thoughts and prompt a cheering song, what would he have found in our churches had their reviving oracles been heard?

When Francis I. was made prisoner in the park of the Carthusians at Pavia, he desired to be conducted into the church, when the monks at that moment singing Tierce, were chanting the verse, Coagulatum est, sicut lac, cor eorum; ego vero legem tuam meditatus sum. The king, disposed to a solemn feeling by his misfortunes, joined them in repeating the next verse. "Bonum mihi quia humiliasti me, ut discam justificationes tuas." O genuine glitter of Eternal Beam, with what sudden force dost thou enlighten the darkness which resteth upon the uncertain and intricate ways of mortal life, pregnant with delusive phantoms!

What counsel, what consolation for humanity amidst its unnumbered woes, in the constant recurrence of those holy psalms, sung by the church, day and night! For what lesson of wisdom and patience, and heroic virtue, did they not teach? Did they not inculcate, as St. Basil says, "the magnificence of fortitude, the exact severity of justice, that temperance, so venerable even in its aspect, the perfection of prudence, the form of penance, the measure of patience and every kind of good *? To observe with what care the profound sense of the different parts of the ecclesiastical office was explained by the doctors of the middle ages, we need only refer to the remarks of Hugo of St. Victor, on the song of the Magnificat, where he shows that it is not without great reason that it is sung with such peculiar veneration by the church †.

"In the book of Psalms," says St. Ambrose, "there is a medicine of salvation for the human race: the psalm is the benediction of the people, the praise of God, the voice of the church, the confession of faith, the full devotion of authority, the joy of freedom, the cry of rapture; it mitigates anger, it banishes care, it alleviates sorrow, it hails the birth of day, it attends also its decline, it sanctifies the stillness of night. The apostle commands women to keep silence in the church, but they may chant the psalm with praise. This is sweet to every age and becoming to both sexes; this old men sing and forget their

* Præf. in Ps.

† Annot Elucid. Alleg. in Marcum, Lib. III.

infirmities; this young men sing and commit no intemperance; youths sing the psalm without danger to their innocence, and maidens without disparagement to their modesty. Children love it, and it even fills infants with admiration. Kings and emperors sing with their people, because the psalm is profitable to all *."

Hugo St. Victor, in a golden little book on the mode of prayer, refutes the objection of those who would deny the fitness of the divine offices, on the ground of their not being composed exclusively in the deprecatory form. "Some," he says, "are accustomed to ask why, when we wish to pray God for ourselves or others, we sing certain psalms, which neither contain words of petition nor have any relation apparently to our wants,—and moreover, use other parts of Scripture as a prayer, though they have no form of supplication or connexion with our state; what advantage arises then from using words which express nothing of what we ought to ask from God? what skills it to sing, 'Quare fremuerunt gentes,' or 'Attendite, populo meus?' Is it not ridiculous to fancy that we pray when we sing such things?—This is what they say: but whoever diligently considers the nature of prayer, will easily discern how such words avail. This kind of prayer is often found more efficacious than that in which we manifestly and explicitly declare our wants. For there is this difference between supplicating man and God—that man cannot know our necessity unless he be informed of it; whereas God knows it before we ask. Man, therefore, must be informed by our narration; but in prayer to God, narration is unnecessary. Therefore, to speak briefly, when we praise God, whatever be the words used, however prolix, what else do they express but this one thing—that adoring we love him, and that loving we adore him? Similarly, when we treat of our misery before him, whatever be the words, and however prolix, what do they express but that, from our heart, we seek his mercy, and place all our confidence in it? No parts of the Scripture are to be counted alien from the office of prayer, since, whether by insinuation, or inference, or entreaty, or announcement, all parts can infuse the affections of

* S. Ambros. Præf. in Psalm.

virtue, by means of which we shall pray more effectually than by the mere words of prayer. And who can enumerate all the virtues of the Psalms? Who can number those ignited compunctions of holy affections with which the mind that uses them is kindled in prayer, when the most grateful sacrifice to God is offered up on the altar of the heart * ?"

We have already had incidental proof that in the early as in the middle ages, the multitude joined in the choral song of the church.—

"Intonet omnis homo cantica sacra Deo,"

is the line of Cosmas Materiensis, in his Poem entitled "The Passion of the Holy Martyrs," dedicated to Gregory, the monk of Nonantula, and after seven hundred years, discovered among the ancient manuscripts of that abbey †. The people joined in the Psalmody of the clergy in primitive times ‡. St. Cæsarius of Arles compelled the laity to join with the religious in singing in the church the divine office, the psalms and hymns, the proses and antiphons: and in the second Council of Vasens, he entreated the people to assemble in the church at matutinal vigils, tierce, sext, and nones. In his sermons he exhorts the faithful, that, "despising the bitterness of the world, they would repair to the church, where they may receive the sweetness of Christ." Fortunatus says of St. Germain, Bishop of Paris,—

"Pontificis monitis clerus, plebs psallit et infans §."

"My brethren," says St. Ephrem, "be assiduous in repairing to the places of our assemblies, whether during the night or at sun-rise, or during the day; whoever you be, of whatever rank, of whatever sex, of whatever condition, asten to assist at the celebration of the divine mysteries ||" Not only clerks, but also laymen, used to meet daily to assist at the divine office ¶, unprevented by the hours of the secular life. St. Gregory Nyssen relates, in the life of his sister, St. Macrina, that after supper and

* De Modo Orandi Libellus. † Italia Sacra, Tom. I. 3.
‡ Gerbert, de Cantu Sacra, Tom. I. 158.
§ In Lib. II. Car. 101. || Serm. IV.
¶ Joan. Devot. Instit. Canon. Lib. II. tit. iv. 1.

a familiar conversation with his sister, he went to the church to return thanks to God at the vesper service—for every one used to go to the church at that hour, which the Greeks called ἐπιλύχνιος. The English Fathers of the Council of Cloveshoe, in the eighth century, required the faithful laity to assist at the divine psalmody in the church. They call it a medicine for the soul; and they add, "Although some one may be ignorant of the Latin words, yet he should supplicantly refer the intention of his heart to those things which are to be asked of God. And after the offices, such a person ought to pray secretly in Saxon, for mercy and remission of his sins, and for the repose of the dead*." The early canons required the faithful to assist at vespers as well as at mass. In one church at Lugano I observed it was a custom for laymen to go into the choir, and sing the canonical hours like monks. In Verona there were five oratorios, where many youths used to assemble on festivals to recite the hours of the Blessed Mary, after which the Gospel would be explained to them by a priest†. Young women, in the castles of our ancestors, used to follow the advice of St. Jerome, when he requires that a daughter should recite the hours of matins, tierce, sext, nones, and that with lighted tapers she should offer the vesper sacrifice ‡. Indeed, the intention of the church is sufficiently seen in the indulgences which she bestows on all the faithful who assist at matins and lauds, and at the first and second vespers, as also at the lesser hours of Christmas §, and Corpus Christi ‖. At the consecration of the Church of St. Mary at Ferentinum, in the year 1191, the office began in the evening, at which assisted a great multitude of laics as well as clergy from Campagna and the Maritime Provinces. The people remained without the church during the night, watching the relics, which were under illuminated tents, and singing "Hæc est vera fraternitas." On all sides a song, and a jubilation of laymen and of women, never ceased throughout the whole night¶.

In one of the Capitularies which Dacherius brought to light after lying in dust for more than eight hundred

* Can. 27. † Italia Sacra, V. 664.
‡ Epist. LVII. § Sixt. V. Bref. 1586.
‖ Urban V. 1264, Martin V. 1429. ¶ Italia Sacra, I. 675.

years, we read as follows:—"It is to be intimated, that the appropriate responses should be said to the sacerdotal salutations; for not only clerks and priests, dedicated to God, should offer the response, but all the devout people ought to answer with consonant voice*." By several councils in the time of Charlemagne it was decreed that "a laic in the church should repeat the psalms and responses, but not the allelujah†." The people, as we see in Catholic countries at present, knew the psalms by heart. "Facile psalmi memoria retinentur," says Nicetius, "si frequenter psallantur. In psalmis Christi sacramenta cantantur‡." An affecting instance of this knowledge is presented in the history of Spain. When the Catholic army under Ferdinand and Isabella entered Moclin in solemn state, with the standard of the cross borne in the advance, they were accompanied by a band of priests and friars, with the choir of the royal chapel, chanting the hymn "Te Deum Laudamus." As they were moving through the streets in this solemn manner, every sound hushed excepting the anthem of the choir, they suddenly heard, issuing as it were from under ground, a chorus of voices, chanting the words "Benedictum qui venit in nomine Domini." The procession paused in wonder. The voices were those of Christian captives, who were confined in subterraneous dungeons. The heart of Isabella was greatly touched: she ordered the captives to be drawn forth from their cells; and then these poor creatures came forth, wasted by hunger, half naked, and in chains. Many of them were brave knights who had been wounded and made prisoners in the defeat of the Count of Cabra.

It must be acknowledged that this familiarity of the people with the ecclesiastical offices, is a fact in the history of the middle ages of which many modern readers may not have been prepared to hear: for undoubtedly, in latter times, after so long a period has elapsed since the removal of the blessed source of light and warmth, when

* Capitulare Ahytonis Episcop Basiliensis III. Spicileg. Tom. VI.

† Concil. Mogunt. c. 9, Capitul. 49, l. 5. Capitul. 136. Heraldi Turon. 10. c. 105, p. 7. Burchard, c. 87, l. 8.

‡ Nicetius Episcop. de Psalmodiæ Bono apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. III.

the public mind and manners have been so estranged from the supernatural tone of faith. when the only thirst recognised is for delusive streams, when the only provision made is for mere material interests,—men lose all personal acquaintance with the sublime and beautiful liturgy of the church; and in compliance with their weakness, the solemn proses, the venerable hymns, are either omitted altogether, or else passed over in haste, as something frivolous or obsolete, in which there is no interest taken. There remain but a few men, lovers of antiquity, in whose minds the idea of the divine office is mingled with a certain Virgilian sadness, as if it were a thing that had been; and who cannot but feel in some degree the affliction of the prophet when he cried, "How is the gold obscured, the best colour changed!" "Dispersi sunt lapides sanctuarii in capite omnium plateārum." But some estimate may be formed of what existed in ages of faith, from what we find in countries wholly Catholic at present, where is still fulfilled the prayer of the church in the benediction of the paschal candle—that in which she desires that her courts may resound with the great voice of the people. Mabillon speaks of many secular men, kings and nobles, who used, like Alfred and St. Louis, to recite the Breviary every day *. The young and old, the poor and rich, persons of both sexes and of all conditions, used to know these compositions by heart, and would love to return to them with the course of the ecclesiastical year, and to sing them with the utmost fervour, uttering so ready and so cordial an "Amen," as plainly spoke a personal and profound conviction of their justice. In fact, for many natures, the soul being imbued with the melody of the different Catholic hymns, psalms, and proses, was thought to be an essential part of education, and almost as important as a knowledge of the catechism; for, as the ancients held that it was necessary to be a musician to understand the Timæus of Plato, so it seemed that, without a knowledge of music, the philosophy of the Catholic Church could not be understood. The truth is, that with our fathers, domestic or patriarchal had not superseded Catholic and Christian manners; the dividing and appropriating spirit had not destroyed that of diffusion; men had not become so

* Præfat. in VI. Sæcul. Bened. 6.

formed to habits of savage ferine seclusion as to make their hearths their altar; the entertainments, the conversations of their domestic circle, were not dearer to them than the public offices of religion; the festival had not yielded to the banquet, nor the benediction to the amusements of evening society. The churches being the assemblies most generally and dearly loved, careful and curious provision was made for the edification of the laity, by maintaining the solemn offices unmaimed, and by celebrating them as the church prescribed. In those grave times, when men deeply felt the utter incompatibility of reverence with levity, offices, however rapidly recited, were not mutilated or passed over in an inarticulate and confused manner. For no man, vested in sacred or any public dignity, could then have been accused of forming an exception to the general character of the human race, as we find it designated by Homer, when he speaks of *μερόπων ἀνθρώπων* The words read by the priest for all were, as Mabillon observes, to be pronounced aloud, that those who assisted could hear them *. In places the farthest removed from centres of faith and fervour, the offices were still celebrated according to the universal custom of the church—for it was the desire of the holy and fervent, not that of the scornful and indifferent, which was consulted during the middle ages; on account of which judgment, let no one attach blame to former guides, since it was an evidence of their wisdom to reject the policy that would require things to be reduced to the lowest standard, in order to please the weakest. To prove this, we need only observe how the Creator himself deals with men; for the beauty and the magnificence of the natural world, which are also a sacred scripture, or a kind of holy office, are not proportioned to the capacities of children, but it is only as men approach to the highest cultivation of which their intelligence is susceptible, that they can fully appreciate them. By adhering uniformly to the Roman offices, the strong were supplied with the nourishment appropriate to the wants of their intelligence, without neglecting the interests of the weak: for besides that their particular wants could easily be supplied, it was well known that they are always attracted and pleased by meeting with

* De Studiis Monast.

what contains more than they can fully master, in the same manner as children are ravished at the works and voice of nature. It is not merely the expert swimmer who loves to behold the ocean stream; children too are delighted when they look down upon its profound abyss, and listen to its foaming tide. So do the humble and illiterate contemplate with awe the mystic solemnities of the church, and in an extacy of the most sweet imprisonment, listen to her lofty song.

In conformity with these principles, the divine offices were not merely celebrated in cathedrals and monasteries, but also in all churches, from the sixth century. The canons of the Council of Lyons, in the year 475, commanded clerks who should be in villages to assist at matins. It was decreed in the year 787, in England, by a council, that every church should discharge its course of canonical hours with reverence; and King Edgar, in the tenth century, decreed that the bells should be tolled at the regular hours to give notice to the people. The same custom prevailed in France,—"so far," adds Mabillon, "were the laity of those ages from considering it a proof of great religion to hear a mass on days of obligation *." In fact, so habituated were the laity to find consolation and assistance in the regular offices of the church, that when, to meet the exigencies of evil days, a new order arose, illustrious for the sanctity and learning of its members, but so instituted as to be obliged to abandon their public celebration for active combat, the fact of its having churches without choirs was adduced as a serious charge against it; and that, not by the religious of the ancient orders who adhered to them, but by secular magistrates and lawyers, speaking in the name of the lay society†. St. Cæsarius, of Arles, on account of the number of laymen who used to come to matins and to complin, used to recite homilies and passages from the sacred Scriptures and from the passions of the martyrs. From the ninth century we find, in the books of every age, that the acts of St. Stephen, which, according to the Roman ritual, were alone read at mass, are given in the vulgar tongue; for, after having been read in Latin, they used to be sung in the vulgar language to

* Disquisit. de Cursu Gallicano.

† Pasquier Recherches de la France, Liv. III. 44.

the people *. It is a favourite opinion with those who feel no regret for the abandonment of ancient discipline, that the devotional assiduity of men in the churches in the middle ages, was not combined with spiritual piety, or the habit of mental prayer. On referring, however, to the books of that time, we find this opinion has no other foundation but the abuse to which the best institutions are always liable. Constant allusion is made to the maxim of St. Augustin, "Non clamans sed amans cantat in aure Dei." It was the edict of the blessed Benedict, "Sic stemus ad psallendum ut mens nostra concordet voci nostræ. Non in clamosa voce," saith he, "sed in puritate cordis et compunctione lacrymarum nos exaudiri sciamus †."—"Prayer is of the heart, not of the lips," says Hugo of St. Victor ‡; who, on the other hand, shows elsewhere that the psalmody and long offices of the choir are not on that account to be blamed, but to be animated with the fervour of internal love §. The remembrance of having pronounced one verse without a firm attention during the office of matins, upon which he was then meditating in the church, according to his custom, after singing it with the clergy, was sufficient to induce Raynaldus, Archbishop of Ravenna, to recommence it from the beginning; which devout exercise detained him till the break of day. This was in the beginning of the fourteenth century ||.

"In the ecclesiastic song, we do not regulate our judgment by the rules of the theatre," says Cardinal Bona, following St. Jerome; "so that if there be any child with an indifferent voice, yet if he has good works, he is a sweet singer before God." "Alas!" cries St. Augustin, "quam multi sonant voce, et corde muti sunt! Cantat Deo, qui vivit Deo."

The celestial music consists in the contemplation of God, in exultation of mind, and in immortality of body. "Neither sweet music," says the wise Ascetic, "nor hymns, nor holy books, nor beautiful treatises, nor the presence of good men, nor of devout brethren, can profit much when we are deserted by grace, and left to our own

* Gerbert, de Cantu Sacra, I. 390. † In Regul. c. 20. 52.
‡ De Anima, Lib. III. cap. 29.
§ Annot. Elucid. Allegor. in Matthæum, Lib. II. 2.
|| Italia Sacra, I. 383.

poverty." "The prayer of the mouth," says Louis of Blois, "is like the straw; and that of the heart is the grain. These two joined together are favourably heard by God *." Another spiritual writer, exhorting the novices, when assisting at the divine offices, to cherish the most fervent devotion, in imitation of the angelic hierarchy, adds, "For all acts, if viewed of themselves, separated from elevation of mind, are like dead bodies lying on the ground; but if that spirit of life, which the mind can receive from God, begins to blow, then instantly they rise, and declare the glory of God †." We read in the canons of Crodogang, that "the singers must be humble and devout men," "quorum melodia animos populi circumstantis ad memoriam amoremque cœlestium non solum sublimitate verborum, sed etiam suavitate sonorum, quæ dicantur erigat ‡."

The most express and minute rules were given to regulate the external behaviour in the churches. The canons of the Synod of Risbach, in the diocese of Ratispon, held in the year 799, commence with these words, "In æde sacra ne strepunto; ne ambulanto; ante finem rei divinæ ne excedunto §." The decrees of Crodogang descend to such particular details as to direct their censure against those loathsome guttural feats which the Easterns hold in horror, though at present in the most civilized nations of the West they are practised every where with effrontery. In this prohibition one discovers the gentle courtesy of the middle ages, for the words of the canon are, "ut infirmis mentibus non vertatur in nauseam ||." Speaking unnecessarily in the Church subjected offenders to heavy ecclesiastical censures in the middle ages as well as in primitive times ¶. "To external reverence in the Church," says Cardinal Bona, "belong the keeping a watch upon the senses, the composition of the outward man, the tone of voice, gravity of manner, decency of habit, and the observance of

* Instit. Spirit. c. 8.

† P. Joan. a Jesu Maria Instruct. Novehorum, III. 1.

‡ Crodogangi Regula Canonic. cap. 50, apud Dacher. Spicileg Tom. I.

§ Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 110.

|| Reg. Can. cap. 15, apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.

¶ Concil. Gradens.

all ceremony and prescribed rite; that the knees be bent, that we stand, sit, rise again, and incline as the occasion requires, that nothing may appear which can offend the beholders *." Cassian †, and St. Benedict ‡ sanction the custom of sitting humbly and modestly in the Church, when the occasion permits. In the decrees collected by Ives de Chartres, we read that the clergy are to teach the people to kneel at mass during Lent; but that on Sundays and festivals no knee should be bent from eve to eve, but that all were to pray standing, according to ancient discipline attested by Tertullian §, and St. Irenæus ||, and enforced by the Council of Nice ¶, which had never been interrupted in monasteries: Paul, the deacon, speaking of the monks of Monte Casino, expressly mentions that they never bent the knee at the public office on Sundays, nor on any day between Easter and Pentecost **. The custom of resting one knee only on the earth is denounced in this collection, as having an indecorous resemblance with the act of the Jews who mocked our Lord ††. In the tenth century, during the canon of the mass, men lay prostrate on the earth; but towards the period of the great outbreak of heresy in the fifteenth century, the piety of men became so cold, that one bishop published ten days of indulgence to those who should remain at mass until the end, and his successor continued it to all truly penitent and confessed, provided they remained on their knees from the elevation of the holy Eucharist to the elevation of the chalice: so languid was the piety of that time ‡‡. No one instructed in the philosophy of the ages of faith, was disposed to consider such injunctions as frivolous. "Harmony in the body," says Plato, "appears always to be adjusted for the sake of sympathy in the soul §§." "They who pray," says St. Augustin, "fashion their limbs in accordance with the act of supplication when they bend their knees, or extend their hands, or prostrate themselves on the ground, although their invisible will and intention of heart be known to

* De Div. Psal. 491. † Lib. II. c. 12. ‡ Cap. 9.
§ De Orat. c. 23. || Fragm. ¶ C. 20.
** Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. Epist. ad Carolum Regem.
†† Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars IV. c. 36.
‡‡ Mabillon, Præfat. in V. Sæcul. Bened. §. 6.
§§ De Repub. Lib. X.

God, and he does not want these signs that the human mind may be revealed to him, yet by them, man excites himself more to pray and groan humbly and fervently, and I know not how, while these movements of the body must have been preceded by a movement of the mind, nevertheless by means of the external and visible act, the internal and invisible is increased, and thus what preceded is augmented by what follows *." It was but natural that before the invention of printing, the use of books by the people in the churches should not have been general. In the fifteenth century, a prayer-book for the use of the people in England, entitled the Festival, resembling those at present in use, was printed by Wynkyn de Worde. The Psalter, the Gospels, the Acts, as also all the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, for the whole year, were translated into English by Richard, a religious hermit in the reign of King Henry II. The archives of the churches of St. Severin, at Bordeaux, of Senlis, Laon, and Rheims, make mention of missals which were enclosed in an iron cage attached to a pillar in the nave, so that the hand could enter through the bars to turn over the pages. Many of the laity who repeated the office, knew most of it by heart; others had manuscript leaves to assist their memory. When the Emperor of Germany took leave of King Charles V. of France, at Paris, Christine de Pison says, that he begged that he would give him one of his books of hours, saying, that he would pray to God for him. The king presented him with two, one little, the other great †. The prayer-book of Charles-le-Chauve, which with his Bible, is in the king's library, at Paris, is bound richly, covered with precious stones and with bas-reliefs in ivory of the most curious workmanship. In the chapel of the Castle of St. Ouen, belonging to the knights of the Order of the Star, founded by King John, there was a book for their use in French prose, which is noticed in the catalogue of the library of Charles V ‡. In the library of Plasantia, may be seen the Psalter of the Empress Engelberge, wife of Louis II. written with her own hand in the year 847. How early the use of devotional manuscripts

* De Cura pro Mortuis.

† Livre de Faiz, &c. Lib. III. c. 45.

‡ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. III.

prevailed in secular life, may be found attested even on the ancient sepulchres, as on that affecting tomb which faces the monument of Dagobert, in the Abbey of St. Denis, where a young princess is represented in the attitude of death, with her poor little book of hours pressed against her bosom. The rosary, however, was the most ordinary devotion of the people in a devout and meditative age, when men had leisure for contemplation. This was not instituted by the Venerable Bede, as the English word beads has led some to suppose, for in the English councils the Latin word beltedus is used, which Ducange derives from the Saxon word, belt. There is something which remarkably evinces the spirit of the middle ages in the advice which we find given to assist men at their devotion and to nourish the fervour of their piety. The Church herself prays that what we cannot celebrate with worthy minds we may, at least, attend with humble service *. "When cold in prayer," says one writer, "consider how many servants of God are then at their prayers, shedding tears of devotion, in forest cells and monasteries, and in the basilica of the martyrs, and do you now in spirit join yourself to them †." To this refers also what St. Ignatius calls the prelude of composition of place, as when men were told to imagine themselves actually present at the different scenes recorded in the Gospel. In the history of Leopold, Archduke of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand II. there is given an account of his private papers, in which he drew up certain rules for his devotions. In the manner of assisting at mass, he says, "At the Gospel, I will listen to the words as if they proceeded from the mouth of Jesus Christ and were addressed to me alone." Thee too, Leopold of Tuscany, among the worthies of antique days, let this humble page commemorate, whom in the church of the Annunciata, at Florence, I beheld on the festival of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin: for when at solemn mass the book of the Gospels was brought to thee after the deacon had read therefrom, lowly sinking on thy bended knees, thou didst kiss it devoutly, and then with palms inverted hide thy face, at which moment I remarked some cheeks down which stole a tear. That

* Prayer of S. S. Perpetua and Felicitas.

† Thom. a Kemp. Epist.

going up to the offering at mass, was a solemn and impressive thing which the people in many places have been unwilling to abandon. St. Emanuel, Bishop of Cremona, in the year 1170, celebrating mass, and refusing to receive the oblations of those who came up to the offering wearing long hair like women, the men who were rejected, retired to the door, and cut off their hair with their knives or swords, rather than suffer such a privation for its sake *. Similarly it was the basilica of St. Peter, at Spoleto, which was made to attest the solemn act of the citizens, who on giving themselves to the pontiff, cut off their hair and beards, being the first of the Longobards to renounce that ancient distinction of their race †.

The distribution of blessed bread among all who assisted at high mass, which each house in the parish used to offer in turn, was another ancient rite, originating in the eulogia, which was the surplus of bread offered by the faithful for the altar, that was blessed by the priest, and distributed to all who did not communicate, and to children ‡. The names of the offerers were inserted in diptychs and recited from the altar §. Thus Dagobert is related to have given many things to the churches, in order that on Sundays and festivals his name might be inscribed in the book of life ||. We find the names of Otho the Great, and of his wife Adelheid, of Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne, and of Otho's brother William, Archbishop of Mayence, of the sons of Otho, and of forty-four other persons, nobles and religious in the ancient diptych of the monastery of St. Maximin at Treves. In Italy where the young are so exquisitely formed and endowed with such a refined and spiritual look, having lines so beautifully pencilled that their countenances resemble those of angels in the paintings of Guido the Bolognese, one must be often struck with the tender piety evinced by poor children in the churches: and methinks it explains somewhat of the middle ages to behold these innocents, with garments so

* Italia Sacra, Tom. IV. 605. † Ib. I.

‡ Thomassinus de Vet. et Nov. Ecclesiæ Disciplin. Pars III. Lib. I. 14.

§ Saga de Diptychis Veterum, cap. 4.

|| Duchesne, Tom. I. Scripta Franc.

rough, and figures so soft and delicate, praying by themselves with the utmost fervour and recollection. It appears that great care was employed in excluding from the Churches whatever might distract the minds of the people; for which purpose there was a multitude of minor clerks employed who had not strictly orders. In early days, the danger of interruption from the pagans, made the porters of great consequence. When Pope St. Cornelius was elected in 254, the Roman Church had forty-four priests and one hundred and eight ministers. The proportion of the latter increased since the time of Constantine, and for five hundred years the churches were magnificently served. By many decrees, as that of the Council of Salzbourg, in the year 1386, the penalty of suspension was to be incurred by such of the clergy as failed in paying due attention to the condition of the vestments, ornaments, and sacred vessels of the altar *. To preserve the Cathedral of Pientina in its original beauty, Pius II. its founder published a decree in the year 1362, pronouncing the severest censures on any one who should violate the whiteness of the walls and columns †. Fleury and Chardon remark, that the saints of the early ages, in attending with such care to external things, were not occupied about trifles. They understood the importance of preserving the beauty of the place, the silence, decorum, order of the discipline, and the majesty of the ceremonies. Services of this nature were not then delegated to vulgar hirelings of ferocious manners, but to spiritual persons in whom meekness sweetened duty. Women were never to approach the altar to discharge any ministry ‡. By the Council of Châlons in 650, as by many others, no one wearing arms was to presume to enter the church. "We who are always surrounded with the arms of legitimate empire," says Theodosius the younger, "and who should be constantly attended by an armed company, nevertheless when about to enter the temple of God, leave our weapons outside." The Council of Slengastad, however, admitted of one exception in favour of the king. At the time when the Normans were in military possession of the country, Count Rodulf, one of their chieftains, came to the Abbey of

* German. Sacra, Tom. II. 462. † Italia Sacra, I. 1179.
‡ Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars II. c. 135.

Monte Casino with the intention of taking the abbot prisoner, yet on entering the church he left his arms as usual, says the chronicle, outside, of which the servants of the abbey proceeded to take an advantage that could only be excused by the danger of their position *. In like manner, when Desiderius, a young prince of Beneventum, came there with his company, we read that the servants were left outside the door, ostensibly for the sake of guarding the swords and horses, though in reality it was to provide for the escape of the prince, through a postern in the church, in order to accomplish his desire of embracing the monastic habit †. When in the year 1406, at Paris, some serjeants had seized during the divine office in the Church of St. Jacques de la Boucherie, a criminal who had retired there, the divine service instantly ceased, and interdicts were fulminated which were not loosened until the sentence of reparation had been passed. In the book before the last, we had occasion to revert to the law and custom of asylums, for in the middle ages, we read of men taking sanctuary where now they take vengeance. Who is not moved at hearing that in times of the greatest disorder and misery, there was always one city of refuge, which never beheld the horrid images of war, where no gentle loving spirit was constrained to recoil in terror :—

> ταρβήσας χαλκόν τ', ἠδὲ λόφον ἱππιοχαίτην
> δεινὸν ἀπ' ἀκροτάτης κόρυθος νεύοντα νοήσας ‡,

where no one, however daring, was ever seen even to enter κεκορυθμένος αἴθοπι χαλκῷ ; for the act of Philippe-le-Bel, who entered the Church of Nôtre Dame on horseback, on returning to Paris after his victory in Flanders, was like a sinister omen of future impiety, and only in character with the tyrant, who had pushed his sails into the temple and spared not even Christ's vicar in his wrath. The reverence due to the sacred mysteries was accurately stated and strictly maintained. It was reserved for the faithful of later times to behold in their sanctuaries the boasting of those who hate God in the midst of his solemnity—"Et gloriati sunt qui oderunt te

* Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis, Lib. II. c. 71.
† Id. Lib. III. c. 2.
‡ Il. VI. 469.

in medio solemnitatis tuæ *." "Consider," my beloved," says St. Ephrem of Edessa, "with what fear those stand before the throne, who wait on a mortal king. How much more does it behove us to appear before the heavenly King with fear and trembling, and with awful gravity †." "Here were," as St. Chrysostom says, "greater symbols than the holy of holies contained, for here was not the cherubim—here were not the urn and the manna, and the tables of stone, and the rod of Aaron, but the body and blood of our Lord ‡." "Truly tremendous," he cries, "are the mysteries of the church—truly tremendous are our altars §." The custom of standing during the divine offices is indicated in the name given to the wooden recesses in the choir of collegiate churches, though at the lessons all were permitted to be seated, after the example of Christ among the doctors; and holy men speaking of this practice, remark the saying of Aristotle, that by sitting and resting, the mind becomes wise ||. A very ancient inscription which was formerly on the steps of the pontifical chair in the Church of the Vatican, proves that it was the custom at Rome, in remote times, as it still continues to be in many countries, for the men to be placed on one side of the church and the women on the other ¶. Every emergency is provided for by canonists respecting the celebration of the Christian mysteries. If a priest in saying mass should drop dead or be taken ill, so as to be unable to proceed, and if this should happen before the consecration, the mass was not to be continued by another priest; but if it be after the consecration, the mass was to be finished by another priest, though he should not be fasting, in order that the mysteries might not be left imperfect; for the ecclesiastical precept which enjoins the fast was to give way to the necessity of completing the sacrifice. As the canon says, "Since we are all one in Christ, the diversity of persons forms no contrariety." If the church should be violated or polluted, before the canon, the mass was to be interrupted, if after it, to be completed. If the advance of an enemy, or the breaking in of a flood, or any ruin should occasion imminent danger, before the

* Ps. xiii. † Paræn. XIX. ‡ In Ps. cxxxiii.
§ Hom. 46. || Physic. 7.
¶ Pauli Aringhi Roma Subterranea, p. 117.

canon, the mass was to be suspended, if after the consecration, the priest was hastily to receive the body and blood. If an enemy of the Christian religion should threaten the priest with death, unless he brake off the mass, the canonists said, that the priest was bound to continue, though at the risk of his life, whether it be before or after the consecration. Pope Gregory VII. being wounded on the head by an assassin, who favoured King Henry, as he said mass on the night of Christmas, did not descend from the altar until he had finished the mass which he had begun. But there were some occasions when it was held necessary to break off the mass, even after the consecration, as when a dying child was to be baptized, or any one was to be confessed and administered being at the point of death, who otherwise might have died without the sacraments *.

On the festival of St. Michael, as the Christians were assembled in the Island of More, and St. Francis Xavier was at the altar saying mass, a violent earthquake came on in the middle of the sacrifice. The people in the utmost terror fled out of the church, but the saint remained at the altar and finished the sacred mysteries. The barbarians were lost in astonishment on beholding a man who remained immoveable, while the rocks and the mountains trembled, and they judged him to be divine †. The Archduke Leopold, of Austria, son of the Emperor Ferdinand II. being at his devotions in a church at Salsfeld, and the artillery of the enemy beginning to rage, and the balls to fly on all sides, he was warned of his danger, but he replied, "that no one could injure him while he was so near his God." In the Franciscan convent, at Clonmel, in the midst of the choir was the stately monument of Edmund Butler, Baron of Cahir, all of marble, with very curious figures and bas relievos. That baron being at high mass in the monastery, news was brought him that the Earls of Ormond and the Barons of Dunboine, his relations, were then ravaging his lands. He was no way discomposed, but staid till the mass was finished, and then marching against the invaders, defeated them ‡. Louis XII. on entering a church to hear mass, received a letter, which was known to contain

* Bened. XIV. de Sacrif. Missæ sect. 2. 105—118.
† Bouhours, I. 203. ‡ Monast. Hiber. 277.

news of great importance respecting the success of his arms. Nevertheless he would not open it until the sacrifice was finished. In these ages, men otherwise steeled against conscience were found impressed with such a reverence for the churches, that they shrunk from the thought of making them the scene of their crimes. When Verinna, one of the conspirators in league with Fiesquo, proposed to assassinate Andrew and Jannetin, Doria and Adam Centurione, while they were assisting at mass, the count instantly rejected the plan with horror, declaring that he would never consent, for the sake of any advantage, to commit such an outrage to the most holy mystery of religion. This fact is mentioned by the Cardinal de Retz. Who has not heard the surprising history relating how the Christian churches were respected even by the barbarous invaders of Rome, to which St. Augustin, with such eloquence alludes, in comparing them with the heathen temples, saying, Ibi amissa, hic servata libertas: ibi clausa, hic interdicta captivitas. The basilicas of Christ inspired ferocious barbarians with humility and pity, who then gave a new spectacle to the world *?

Having now taken a general view of the sacred offices in relation to history, in order to complete what we have begun, let us conceive ourselves present, and penetrating as it were into the crowd, let us cast a contemplative look upon the wondrous and the tender scene. Lo, what an assembly is here. This is the blessed vision of peace. It is here that the race of men seems amiable. It is here that we feel how near they are to God who thus showers down his mercy upon them in the midst of his temple. Yes, sweet is the air of temples to those who have endured the thirst of the Babylonian exile, to those who have wandered sufficiently long in the land of malediction as to discover how tasteless are its fruits, and how void of perfume its most gorgeous flowers. At the first step on entering this garden of God, it is as if one emerged from a withering atmosphere to feel the healthful and delicious breeze of mountains. What a glow of charity suddenly transports the heart and revives the fancy, though joy and hope had before seemed dead. No distrustful, or malignant, or inquisitive looks cause you to

* De Civitate Dei, Lib. I. c. 4. 6.

feel yourself a stranger, for it seems to be here as it is in Paradise, where the blessed hail each new arrival, crying,—

———— " Lo one arrived
To multiply our loves *."

Unnumbered are the wretched men possessing lofty souls tortured by the feeling of isolation, and afflicted with unutterable anguish at the thought of remaining for ever unknown. They thirst after society,—after communion with congenial intelligences. What society then can be found so amiable, so inspiring, so full of all consolation, and of all remedies for human misery as that of the faithful in the house of God? They wish to be entreated, and that their presence may be sought for, but what more noble invitations or more worthy of all acceptation can they receive than those which are made to all the faithful in a Catholic city when they are entreated to come, rich men and beggars, in such composed and seemly fellowship, as would become the fair equality of the golden world, to honour the memory of some friend of God in the church which has invoked him? The feasts of secular luxury last but for a short season. In the divine temples there is an eternal festivity, for nothing there is celebrated that passes away, or that hath a shadow of change. Eternal is the festival in which, as St. Gregory says, we escape from our own mutability by beholding him who is immutable—" Mutabilitatem nostram transcendemus videndo immutabilem †." " From that festivity," says a great author, " there is heard I know not what certain sweet song in the ears of the heart, provided the world doth not disturb it. This unearthly sound soothes the ear of him who walks in the courts of God, who considers the wonders of God in the redemption of the faithful; and it leadeth the stag to the fountains of waters. Nevertheless since as long as we are in the body we are journeying at a distance from the Lord, and that the corruptible body weighs down the mind, and terrene cares oppress it, if by desires sometimes we come to that sound, yet after a while by the weight of our infirmity we fall back to our accustomed sor-

* Dante, Par. V. † Hom. II. Lib. I. super Ezech.

rows. But there we shall always find that in which we can rejoice, although here there is never wanting that which causes us to mourn. And now transporting ourselves to the neighbourhood of some church in the middle ages, behold what a multitude resorts thither. The bell sounding within the lofty tower like the Divine voice, calls many. Soon you see the humble crowd winding its way along the pious path. It is the poor orphan who spins as she walks; it is the blind man who feels his way with his stick; it is the timid beggar whose hand holds a rosary; it is the child who caresses each flower as he passes by; it is the old man who hastens with feeble steps;—youth and age are the friends of God *."

But ere we proceed further, let us listen to the solemn murmur of those bells which invite the faithful:—for though, in a former Book, we had occasion to speak of them, still one cannot refuse to return, and stand awhile, musing at their sound!

In the life of St. Loup, Bishop of Sens, we read, that when King Clothaire heard the bell of St. Stephen, he was so delighted with its tone, that he ordered it to be removed to Paris, where he might always hear it: and the bells of St. Saviour at Blois sent forth such harmony, that when every thing else seemed to fail, they were found to soothe that profound melancholy to which Henry III. was subject †. In the chronicles of Italy we have another example of attention to the music of bells. The Countess Matilda Eurilla, while remaining at Ferrara, went to take the diversion of hunting, with spears and nets, in the woods near the Benedictine Abbey of St. Bartholomew. Imperceptibly the time passed, till the meridian hour found her exhausted with hunger and fatigue. The monks then came out, and with all benignity invited her to take refreshment, which she did not refuse. No sooner had she sat down to table than the bell from the tower emitted a dead and abrupt sound, upon which she asked how it came to be split, and why it had not been cast afresh, in order that it might give a clearer sound. The monks beginning to speak of the poverty of their house, she immediately

* De la Martine Harmonies Poetiques, II. 192.

† Bernier, Hist. de Blois, 35.

took off her jewels and her gold spurs, which she presented to the abbot. The bells were afterwards called by the Italians the spur-bells, and a spur was engraven on the brass, with verses commemorating her pious liberality *. The office of the bell used to be described in these lines: —

> " Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, congrego clerum,
> Defunctos ploro, pestem fugo, festa decoro."

Inscribed on the bell were generally various solemn lines. Thus on one bell of the Cathedral of Strasbourg, you read—

> " Nuncio festa, metum, nova quædam, flebile lethum."

on another—" O Rex gloriæ Christe, veni cum pace." on another—

> " Vox ego sum vitæ, voco vos; orate, venite."

Each tone had often a distinct object to indicate. Thus there was the great and solemn bell exclusively for the high festivals of the Church. Of less magnitude was the bell of the Angelus; the bell to announce the opening and termination of the fair; the bell for the retreat; the bell to announce the divine offices on ordinary occasions. That certain bells of the towers were sounded at the elevation, as well as other parts of the divine office, in order that the people without the church might be excited to prayer, can be collected from a letter of Ives of Chartres, to Matilda, Queen of England, thanking her for the present of bells to that church †. Never can I lose the memory of what I experienced under the dome of Florence, when one heard as if on all sides the indistinct moaning of that solemn bell. Dugdale relates that Athelwold, abbot of Abingdon, in the tenth century, made a wheel, which was filled with bells, which being sounded on the greater festivals, used to excite the devotion of the people. In many churches, as at Stras-

* Italia Sacra, I. 530. † Epist. CXLII.

bourg, there was a different musical air executed by the bells three or four times each day, besides a peculiar harmony of joy for each of the festivals of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Celebrated were the bells of Freyburg in Brisgau; of St. Stephen at Vienna, which tower was erected by Conrad Zaringgen in the twelfth century,—of Salzburg, Erfort, Hamburg, Holm, Rouen, Lyons, Tours, Paris, and of many other places. It required the force of sixteen men to sound the great bell of Strasbourg, which measured twenty-two feet in circumference. In Italy there were bells weighing twenty-two thousand pounds.

But we are at the portal; the space before which is entitled the Paradise, either from its intrinsic beauty or from its proximity to the courts of heaven *, or from the bodies of the faithful reposing there, as before the church of Amalphi †. The whole ground too, as before the cathedral of Cefalu in Sicily, by the piety of Count Roger ‡, and in front of the noble church of Salerno, built by Robert Guiscard, was often deeply covered with holy earth, which had been brought from Jerusalem: and in many places, as at Nola, the whole basilica was surrounded with sepulchres, urns, and inscriptions, redolent of venerable antiquity. At the gate of the latter you read these lines—

"Siste gradum, quamvis properes, en siste, viator;
Te cogat pietas, religioque loci.
Quemque Augustinus, Paulinus, Bedaque libris
Concelebrant, flexo tu venerare genu.
Ingredere, at mundo corde, et simul excute plantas,
Sanctorum quando corpora mille premas."

The inscription at the entrance of the cathedral of Bari in Apulia, admonished the stranger to imitate the humility of the holy men, Hælias and Eustachius, who had built and adorned that church, concluding thus:—

"His gradibus tumidis ascensus ad alta negatur,
His gradibus blandis quærere celsa datur.
Ergo ne tumeas, qui sursum scandere quæris,
Sis humilis, supplex, planus, et altus eris §."

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* In Chronic. S. Monast. Casinens. Lib. II. c. 9, notæ.
† Italia Sacra, VII. 226.
‡ Sicilia Sacra, II. 813.
§ Italia Sacra, VII. 612.

See these smiling children on the steps, these playful innocents, who serve in the temple. See too these devout widows, these humble men, who hasten to ascend! Ah! here must be the entrance to joy; here we shall have renewed the peaceful beauteous dreams of youth, here we shall be reminded of the thoughts of our golden years. For we may remark that the Church, unlike all that belongs to the world, is never rendered by age different from what it was found to be at first. It is like a treasury, in which all the past joys of men are preserved. The innocence and delights of youth, the intellectual riches of maturity, are laid up in store here, safe and uninjured. No one as he grows old, becomes weary of it, but on the contrary, the human heart loves and venerates it, if possible, each day, more and more, for while it restores to the mind of man all the bloom and fragrance of his first years, all that gave joy to his youth, it presents to it in prospect the fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore. At the divine altar, the Catholic beholds and possesses whatever has rejoiced his soul in life: he sees the star by which he has steered through all the gusts and tides of the world's mutability.—But let us enter, passing with timid steps over the threshold; for underneath it often lies buried some humble pontiff, like Bartholomew Castelli, who caused his body to be placed before the greater door of his cathedral of Mazara, in order, as an inscription testified, that it might be trod upon by the feet of all *. an instance similar to which we find at the church of St. James of the Spaniards, in Rome, where, through the same humble choice and desire of mercy, the body of Bartholomew de la Guera, Duke of Albuquerque, and Archbishop of Siponto, lies buried under the threshold †. Lo, what a crowd fills the holy place! This is the house of the Lord, founded on the tops of the mountains, and exalted above all hills; and all nations come to it, and say, "Glory be to thee, O Lord."

We have many records attesting the fulfilment of these words from the history of the ages of faith. Apollinaris Sidonius describes the solemn vigil on the feast of St. Justus. "The procession was before light; a vast multitude was there of both sexes, which that capacious basilica could not contain." St. Hugo VI. abbot of

* Sicilia Sacra, II. † Italia Sacra, VII. 860.

Cluny, was obliged to enlarge the church of the monastery, as it was not able to contain the crowds that resorted to it *. Great was the multitude which the festivals of the martyrs, in the first ages, drew from all parts, to the churches which contained their relics, when, as Theodoret says, our Lord had brought his dead into the room and place of the heathen gods, and instead of the feasts of Jupiter and Bacchus, were celebrated the festivals of Peter and Paul. St. Paulinus enumerates more than twenty cities and provinces of Italy, of which the inhabitants came every year with their wives and children, in the depth of winter, to honour the memory of one confessor, St. Felix, in the city of Nola. We may judge what was the concourse at Rome on the festivals of St. Hippolytus, St. Laurence, and the Apostles; or at Tours, on that of St. Martin. "At Nola," says St. Paulinus, "it is delightful to behold one city enclosing many cities, and such multitudes united by one vow. Thither came the people of Lucania and the Appulian youth, the Calabrians too, and they from joyful Campania, whom rich Capua and beauteous Naples encircle with ample walls,—they who cultivate the happy lands of Gales, whom powerful Atisia and mother Aricia send. Rome even rejoices to see her sacred precincts deserted for the honour of God, while far and wide the issuing multitude pursues the Appian way. Nor are the rough tops of the Latin mountains less thronged, as they whom lofty Prænestе, whom festive Aquinum nourish, and whom ancient Ardea sends from its borders, repair to the festival. Thither hasten crowds also from Olive bearing Venafro; and the hard Samnites leave the mountain towers—

> "Vicit iter durum pietas, amor omnia Christi
> Vincit, et alma fides, animisque locisque rigentes
> Suadet acerba pati, simul aspera ponere corda.
> Una dies cunctos vocat, una et Nola receptat,
> Votaque plena suis spatiosaque limina cunctis,
> Credas innumeris ut mœnia dilatavit
> Hospitibus, sic Nola assurgit imagine Romæ†."

St. Gregory of Tours relates, that on the festival of the blessed martyr of the church of Brest, a clerk of the

* Bibliothec. Clun. 457. † Italia Sacra, Tom. VI. 248.

abbey of Limoges, coming to the festivity, such was the multitude of people, that he could not approach to the holy tomb, nor even enter within the church *. In the year 1500, one of the articles of the Jubilee at Rouen, requiring assistance at a solemn mass in its cathedral, that immense church could not contain the multitude, so that crowds in deep devotion knelt outside, and filled the adjoining streets †. St. Odo says that the church of St. Martin at Tours, though of immense size, was too small for the crowds that sought to enter, insomuch that the rails of the choir and the gate posts used to give way before them; and he adds, "Quam devotam violentiam credo, gratam habet domnus ipse Martinus, ad exemplum videlicet Domini sui quem turbæ comprimebant ‡."

This judgment of the middle ages, according to which an importunate crowd was a sublime spectacle, as being a practical evidence, as well as a kind of repetition of the facts of the Christian history, has nothing to fear from a comparison with the general sentiment of the moderns on the same subject; at least where affectionate and philosophic minds are to determine the question. The haste of the shepherds and the air of the stable were not forgotten on these occasions in Catholic times; nor did any one disdain to find himself in contact with the devout multitude, which would assuredly, with the same importunity, have pressed upon Christ. Being at Loretto, on the festival of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin, I could not penetrate within the Santa Casa until late in the evening of the second day, when being remarked by one of the guards, I was with charitable violence pulled through the more fervent throng. Some men come here to inquire and speculate about the origin of ancient traditions, but to me, who could not remain insensible to the intention of this vast multitude, so visibly impressed with the same tender and devout affections, marvellously foolish seem such pains. It was enough for me to meditate on what I felt and saw.

"The air of paradise did fan the house, and angels officed all."

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* Greg. Turon. Miracul. Lib. II. 28.

† Taillepied, Recueil des Antiquitez de Rouen, 230.

‡ De Combust. Basil. Bibliothec. Cluniac. 146.

Let us remark here what a charm must have been found in the variety of characters which composed this multitude. In modern times, after such a successive diminution of truths affecting both the spiritual and the material hierarchy of society, nothing can be more monotonous than an assembly of people. There are the rich, cuirassed in egotism, initiated in no other rites but those of Bacchus, bred up with the same feeling of disdain for every outward manifestation of piety and fervour: there are the poor, parked in from all observation or contact with the rich, thoroughly subdued and moulded into one form of servilely servile respect. But in ages of faith it was a very different picture. The boundless variety of graces was seen indicated in the members of the faithful fold. In fact, what do we still find in Catholic countries amidst the pious throng? We find the simple hermit come from his woods, the shepherd from the mountains, the young and thoughtful clerk, the solemn religious man, the labouring youth, with joy and triumph in their looks,—all persons dissimilar in habits, in disposition of mind, in the cultivation and direction of their intelligence, and yet who have one centre and bond of union, the Church; and one model, Jesus Christ.—"Non intrabit in eam aliquod, nisi qui scripti sunt in libro vitæ agni." These words seem accomplished here, for before this altar, all who are present may be supposed, from their exterior appearance, to be either saints who have preserved their white baptismal robe unsullied, according to the solemn admonitions of the church, their mother, or else penitents who have atoned, or who are atoning, for having stained its purity. At times, indeed, may be discovered some awful figure, who seems moved, and yet unable to call on Heaven for mercy—one like those we read about in legendary tales, from whose eye no tear can fall, and at whose heart there seems to lie an icy coldness, unrelieved, though five thousand voices join to raise the holy hymn, and hearts are thrilled, and eyes are filled by that full harmony. But remark well, no persons seem to have come here merely to be observed, or to comply with a mechanical habit. Thus there is a common office, but there are particular wants; and therefore, while the priest chants aloud at the altar, the internal desire of innumerable hearts are sent up to heaven. As Pope Benedict XIV. remarks, the object of the secret

prayers is beautifully expressed by the Church in the secret of the mass on the fifth Sunday after Pentecost "Ut quod singuli obtulerunt ad honorem nominis tui, cunctis proficiat ad salutem." How deeply interesting is it, in the assembly of a church in some vast metropolis, to detect the man of interior life, the devout contemplatist, the hermit, who on these occasions comes abroad to mix in the throng of men,—to see in the church the devout student, whom nothing but the office could tear from his books, the holy recluse, who may be looked for elsewhere in vain! there he kneels, with hands crossed upon his breast, and eyes raised to the altar, as the spirit of Nino appeared to Dante,—

——— "Both palms joined and raised,
Fixing its stedfast gaze toward the East,
As telling God, I care for naught beside *."

Where he comes from, no one knows; and when the office is at an end, he will be lost in the retiring crowd, and be seen no more!

What a solemn and moving spectacle is that of the devout female sex in the churches! Dante had in his mind's eye many a living image, familiar to those who visit them, when he drew that touching portrait in the vision of Paradise :—

"Lo! where Anna sits, so well content to look
On her lov'd daughter, that with moveless eye
She chants the loud hosanna †."———

It is like a demonstration of the divinity which presides over all the Catholic offices, to mark the universality of that intense affection with which they are loved by women—those fairest and best of creatures, to whom God hath given intelligence on earth, who turn their steps, or at least their hearts, to the Catholic altar, whether in joy or sorrow, in sickness or in health, like the innocent child, who always runs thither for succour where he trusteth most.

If to behold the divine beauty of the human countenance be at all times sweet to minds contemplative, where can this pleasure be enjoyed so fully as in the

* Purg. VIII. † Id. XXXII.

church! There raptures of love mixed with sorrow, at the solemn moment of communion, give a sublime expression to the countenance. That of joy, as has been acutely remarked by Gerbet, is seldom sublime; for joy is so fugitive and false a thing, that it seems to communicate to the human face somewhat of the air of insanity: grief, on the contrary, almost always ennobles the countenance. The instinct, however, of our primitive destiny, wounded by this contrast, seeks another dignity besides that of sorrow. The true condition of man is the reparation of his misery; and his form never appears clothed in its most beautiful terrestrial character excepting when it takes the expression of this mystery of sorrow and grace, when it receives the imprint of a divine joy, penetrating to the abyss of our sufferings.

Let no one esteem it puerile, if, when treating on the devout assemblies of the faithful, I speak of the pleasure and consolation inspired by the sight of these holy countenances; for doubtless some assistance was rendered to virtue by the mere fact of men being generally accustomed to behold them. It was no small advantage, that in the church one could always reckon upon meeting, from time to time, with persons who bore the mystic sign that Ezekiel saw upon the foreheads, living monuments of infinite almighty grace and power divine. Moreover, in these vast basilicas, thronged with innumerable people, upon a festal day, amidst the splendour of the saints, each one might avoid all notice, feel himself solitary and unobserved by any eye save that of his guardian angel who watched over him. There, before the sacramental presence, the poor stranger—forgotten and forsaken, in a foreign land, alone in the crowd—beholds his one, ancient, and only constant friend, the friend of his childhood, the friend of his youth, his friend for eternity. There too you will sometimes remark the timid maiden, or some child that recalls the image of a divine prototype, who, stealing from observation, drops a small piece of money upon the plate after kissing the cross of Christ: for in the churches, even children enjoy the privilege of free and voluntary sacrifice. O how mysterious and solemn a thing is it thus to be alone in the saintly crowd! to pass as it were a disembodied spirit through such a host of ghostly combatants, thirsting after justice and the streams of a happier world! The land of male-

diction ends here. No more of its restrictions, of its conventional barriers, of its miscalled social forms. The ceremonies of the secular courts would be profanation in the church. No one marshals you; no one heeds you. There are pillars, behind which you may kneel and weep in secret; there are retired chapels, in which you may lie prostrate before the blessed sacrament. The poor walk here free and favoured, as in presence of nature: they can approach to the altars as near as kings, and can enjoy, equally with the pomp and glory of nobility, the splendour and loveliness of the house of God: for the Church, as St. Chrysostom saith, is the common house of all men, in which the priest offers peace in common to all immediately on their entering it; and if concord were perfectly preserved, he adds, we should have no other house but this. Being, however, far removed from the virtue of those who had but one heart and one soul, and being separated from each other by houses at least, when we meet here, it is requisite to have this intention: for, although in other things we may be poor and rich, yet at least when here assembled, it is necessary that all in common should receive the priests of God with charity, and not with the lips alone, but with the mind also, should answer when they give us the salutation of peace *.

Wherever the dignity or order of the sacred assembly required separation, it was not even kings who enjoyed the privilege. Since the first overthrow of order in the Gallic land, the mayor of every little town desires to have his seat apart within the sanctuary, which, like the sacred ark, still from unbidden office awes mankind; but until that epoch, the discipline of the first ages prevailed as established by many councils †; and however displeased Milton may have been, we know that St. Ambrose would not permit even the emperor to remain in the choir after making his offering. In the morning, how bright and splendid is this beauteous temple! Every altar beholds the ineffable mystery accomplished. At night-fall, how solemn is the voice of the preacher, echoing along the dusky aisles, while the deep groan of the hours resounds, murmuring through the stillness of the upper vaults!— Remark too what a bright yet melancholy gleam, the last

* Hom. XXXIII. in 9 Matt.

† Concil. Laod. c. 19; Concil. Trull. c. 69.

of the expiring day, plays upon the upper shafts of the lofty columns! How silent and how awful seem those distant regions above! At one time all is hushed, and you fear almost to breathe. You behold like Dante in the other world,

> " A crowd of spirits, silent and devout;"

speechless, like Œdipus in the Colonæan forest, allowing nothing to escape from their heart but the thought of prayer—

> *ἀφώνως, ἀλόγως τὸ τᾶς*
> *εὐφήμου στόμα φροντίδος*
> *ἰέντες———*

At another, a little way before you, there are perhaps some who sing the Miserere in responsive strains. Lo, how many saints stretch their closed hands in furtherance of their suit! On this side comes the bright procession of taper-bearing white-veiled penitents. Now they make their solemn halt; and now the tears steal down your cheeks, at the thrilling sweetness of that voice which joins the inexpressive song. O Christ, how impressive, how blessed a moment is this! "Beati qui habitant in domo tua, in sæculum sæculi laudabunt te." "The church," says St. Germain, "is the house of prayer, and a terrestrial heaven in which God dwells."

> " O templum! O templum! O felicia limina cœli!
> Solaque digna Deo cœlicolisque domus!
> Hic dulces resonant melicis concentibus hymni,
> Hic colimus casta religione Deum.
> O vos felices, divinorumque capaces,
> Vos quibus astrorum splendida regna patent,
> Vos quibus arrisit cœlum, jussitque tueri,
> Angelicos vultus, angelicosque choros."

"But why," continues Cardinal Bona, "do I propose the angels to excite reverence in those who enter the divine temples? The King of angels, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is himself corporeally present in the adorable sacrament of the altar. How terrible then is this place, and how worthy of all reverence!"

Would you hear the language of the middle ages in reference to these ineffable mysteries? Children of men, say they, you open the book of the divine Scriptures, and you read how Christ the Messiah walked in Judea —how he passed through the multitude—how they who sat by the way-side, cried out, "Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on us"—how the people thronged round, heard, and adored—and you say, "How happy the eyes which saw him, and the ears which heard his divine words!" Deceive not yourselves; say rather, "Beati qui non viderunt, et firmiter crediderunt." Approach—enter the churches, the world of spirits, and exercise that faith which has the promise of life eternal; for when the mystic train moves through the prostrate multitude of those who strike their breasts, while the hymn which rises is sweet as from blest voices uttering joy, you have more encouragement—what do we say? you have greater evidence—to force you to adore him, in sacramental presence, than those men possessed who saw the infant of Bethlehem and Jesus of Nazareth in the sorrows and humiliation and passion of his humanity. Fall down, then, and adore the Messiah, the celestial King, the King of glory; and according to your faith, he will have mercy on you. Are you tempted with unholy thoughts? you will be freed from them. Are you a child of sorrow, wounded by the stern strokes of a calamitous life? you will be comforted. Are you discouraged at the difficulties of your position—do you hunger and thirst after justice? you will be strengthened and refreshed. Mark and obey the prophetic invitation—"Omnes sitientes, venite ad aquas: et qui non habetis argentum, properate, emite et comedite *." Trust the experience of men, who long, like you, have trod the common ways of life, and who assure you that it will be so, that you will be filled with benediction, filled with joy; that from the martyrdom of a sanguinary world, you will come to this peace. Yes, it is so; we may well say it who have received the mercy of the Lord in the midst of his temple. "Sicut audivimus, ita et vidimus in civitate Dei nostri, in monte sancto ejus. Alleluja."

"Whosoever desires to come happily after death to the joys of the celestial kingdom, ought," says an ascetic

* Isa. lv. 1.

writer of the middle ages, "while in health and life, frequently to visit the house of God, willingly to hear preaching, often to repair to confession, and seek to gain indulgences. Happy the people, and greatly laudable, who leaving vain exhibitions, hasten to the house of prayer, and to the announcement of the divine word. Beautiful spectacle! to behold the temple of God every where filled with the faithful, and the market places quiet, undisturbed by the business of the world *." "No place on the earth," says Louis of Blois, "is more grateful to Christians than the house of prayer, where the sacrifice of the mass is daily celebrated in presence of assisting angels—so that from the holy temple these men can scarcely be torn away; and if they behold them at a distance, and are prevented from entering them, they at least salute them with a devout heart, and religiously adore the Lord of eternal Majesty †."

In the mere remembrance of the divine mysteries, men found an assistance in the great combat of life. "Alas! if I could go into a church," we hear one cry, "if I could be where our Lord is lifted up, and appears to the congregation in sacramental presence—then, in that blessed moment, I should die of rapture!" In this mystic Jerusalem the prophecy is already in a great measure fulfilled—God wipes away all tears from the eyes of men, and there is no more death, nor any more grief, nor lamentation, nor sorrow, for the former things have passed away; and he who sitteth upon the throne has accomplished his word, and hath made all things new. The heart-rending regrets of humanity in its humblest state, and the mighty woes of genius, which the vulgar cannot conceive, are alike here forgotten. "Felix hora, quando Jesus vocat de lacrymis ad gaudium spiritus!" Can any thing be more affecting than this language of the middle ages in expressing the abundance of their joy? Hugo de St. Victor speaks of the mystic sweetness of the ecclesiastical mysteries ‡. "O what grace hath our Lord granted to me!" cries a poor recluse, to one who was compassionating her condition: "I might be sick, and I am well; I might be living far away in Pagan

* Thom. à Kempis, Sermonum III. Pars 9.
† Enchirid. Parvul. Lib I. in fin.
‡ Speculum de Myst. Ecclesiæ, Prolog.

lands, and I am born here a Christian, in the neighbourhood of beautiful churches and of holy priests; I might be blind and deaf, but I hear the toll of bells, hear the chants of the choir, and every morning the image of my Saviour on the cross seems to speak to my heart in words of love. I am dead, and I live only for grace, for the chants of the church, and for the holy mass. Ah, my dear friend! when I enter the house of the Lord, and the cathedral high and majestic encompasses me with so much grace and magnificence, every doubt, every earthly disquietude vanishes immediately. The smoke of the incense, the voice of the priest, which rises from the altar when I prostrate myself, awakens in my heart an impassioned fervour. The burning tapers remind me, by their secret flame, of the secret of the world and of creation, and a thrilling emotion spreads over my whole body when I think of the mysteries of which these are the signs. I meditate and I pray. The Creator and Saviour move me with interior and ineffable words, which are heard at the bottom of my soul. I feel within me a love above all love—a beatitude—a felicity—a celestial breath—and then the bell tolls, and the mystery is accomplished: then a shuddering runs through my veins and through the marrow of my bones, and I feel that I am a Christian; that the incarnate Saviour is near me, and that he looks upon me with love."

Some will recognize here the master's hand, which is employed in moulding an ideal world: but there is nothing in this of fiction. Of the intensity of these feelings we have monuments still existing in the stupendous cathedrals of the middle ages In the year 1276, on the festival of the Purification, when Bishop Conrad, after celebrating mass, had marked the spot on which the first stone was to be placed of the cathedral tower of Strasbourg, such was the earnestness of two of the labourers, contending who should be the first to put his hand to the holy work, that one of them in the struggle received a mortal wound from a shovel; and in consequence of this accident, it was not until nine days had elapsed, and the place had been again blessed, that the bishop would permit them to resume the work of laying the foundation.—When Desiderius, the abbot of Monte Casino, was about to rebuild the church of that monastery, having conveyed marbles thither from Rome, so great was the fervour of

the faithful that the first column was borne from the base of the mountain to the summit upon the shoulders of the multitude *. In the eleventh century, Bertha, the mother of St Eberhard, Archbishop of Salzburg, carried stones on her shoulders walking barefoot for the space of half a league, to serve in the construction of the church of St. Mary, which was then being built in her own village of Allerstorff †. We read of churches, as that of Burgo St. Sepulchro, being built by men who, like the two noble pilgrims, Ascanus and Œgidius, returning from the holy sepulchre, had been visited with heavenly dreams, as they slept on the margin of limpid fountains ‡: we read of saints, like Maur, who succeeded Zeno in Verona's chair, retiring to mountains and building churches at a fountain §: and well might the presence of such sweet refreshment awaken the remembrance of those never failing waters which spring up unto eternal life. The churches of the middle ages are all standing memorials of the fervour with which men thirsted after justice, worshipping God day and night with sacred mysteries and holy song.

"Devout persons," says St. Bonaventura, "experience sometimes such a charm of sensible pleasures in the assemblies of the faithful, that they seem as if embalmed in the agreeable perfume which surrounds them, and dissolved in the sweetness of celestial harmony. Perchance this is the grace of God to encourage the imperfect in their commencement of a holy life, or it is the fulness of spiritual perfection, which by reason of the union of the soul with the body is communicated to the senses; or perhaps even it is a favour bestowed upon the body, that as it has been partaker of sorrow, and mortification with the soul, it may now also participate in its joy, for as the body labours with the soul, and both have their sufferings, there may be justice in imparting even to the body some consolation in the present as well as in the future life ||." The Catholic discipline rested upon this conviction, expressed by Lombez, that "man must have pleasure. That if he find it not in the service of God, he

* Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis, Lib. III. c. 28.
† Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 245.
‡ Italia Sacra, III. 195. § Id. V. 692.
|| De Reformat. Hominis Exter. cap. 80.

will look for it in the false joys of the world; for he feels that he is made to possess happiness, and he endeavours to attain his destiny." If he had found barred against him the portals of the house of God, he would have sought admittance to the assemblies of vain pleasure, though shame and ruin were sure to be his end. Showing the benefit derived from frequenting the assemblies of the faithful, the seraphic doctor observes that Saul on joining a company of prophets became himself a prophet, and being separated from them, fell into reprobation. St. Thomas being absent from the assembly of the apostles was deprived of the sight of our Saviour lately risen, and on his return to them he received this honour; and it was when all the disciples were assembled together that they all received the Holy Ghost *. In fact, it was in the churches that the most signal conversions in the middle ages were known to have been made. Many who entered like that old man seen by Abbot Paul, black and cloudy, drawn contrarywise by demons, while their good angel followed at a distance, returned from it like him, shining with a sudden whiteness, having their good angel close at their side, while the demons followed afar off †. "St. Mary of Egypt," say the old writers, "may proceed with the devout multitude of pilgrims to the holy city, to celebrate the festival of the exaltation of the cross, less to adore him who died on it, than to render it the witness of her disorders, and yet then perhaps will be the moment when the designs of the mercy of God may call her to rise from the dead. The Church prays that our vices may be cured by the sacred mysteries, and that we may receive everlasting remedies ‡;" that her solemnities "may both confer upon us the remedies of the present life, and grant us the rewards of eternity §." History is not without mention of memorable examples to exhibit the fulfilment of such prayers. Will you hear the great poet who sung the recovery of Jerusalem, recount to you his own experience? "A time there was," says Tasso, "when I, with clouds of sensuality darkening my mind, could only recognize thee, O Lord, as a certain reason of the universe; for I doubted whether

* Speculum Novitiorum, cap. 23.
† Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars XVII. 58.
‡ Post Com. Exub. Sab. § Id.

thou hadst created the world or endowed man with an immortal soul, and I doubted of many things which flowed from that source; for how could I firmly believe in the sacraments, or in the authority of the pontiff, or in hell, or purgatory, or in the Incarnation of thy Son, if I doubted of the immortality of the soul? Willingly I would have kept down my understanding, of itself curious and wandering, and believed whatever the holy Catholic Roman Church believes and teaches; but this I desired, O Lord, not so much through love of thy infinite goodness, as through a certain servile fear which I had of the pains of hell; for often there used to sound horribly to my imagination the angelic trumpet of the great day of rewards and punishments; and I saw thee sitting upon the clouds, and I heard thee utter words full of terror, depart ye cursed into everlasting fire. And this thought was so strong in me, that sometimes I used to be obliged to impart it to some friend or acquaintance, and in consequence of this fear I used to go to confession and to communion in the times and manner prescribed by thy Roman Church; and if at any time I thought I had omitted mention of any sin through negligence or shame, though it was ever so little and vile, I repeated my confession, and often made a general confession of all my errors. Yet thou knowest that always I desired the exaltation of thy faith with an incredible affection, and that I always wished, though perhaps with a fervour more mundane than spiritual, that the seat of thy faith and pontificate in Rome might be preserved for ever. And thou knowest that the name of Lutheran or heretic, was abhorred and abominated by me as a pestiferous thing, and that my doubts were merely an interior affliction, until thou didst begin to warm and rejoice my heart with the flames of thy love: and then by degrees, by means of frequenting oftener the sacred offices and praying every day, my faith grew stronger from day to day, and I became sensible from experience that it is thy gift, and I learned to see my past folly in having presumed to imagine that I could discover by my intelligence the secret things of thy essence, and estimate by the measure of human reason, thy goodness, thy justice, thy omnipotence *."

* Torquato Tasso, Discorso sopra vari accidenti della sua vita, scritto a Scipion Gonzaga.

This affecting passage only verifies what the writers of the middle ages affirm with regard to the effect of assisting and communicating at the sacred mysteries "Effectus Eucharistiæ," say they, "sunt, præservare à peccatis, augere gratiam, terrenorum odium infundere, ad æternorum amorem mentem elevare, illuminare intellectum, succendere affectum, conferre animæ et corpori puritatem, conscientiæ pacem et lætitiam, atque inseparabilem cum Deo unionem." To these adorable mysteries of the altar the faithful came, pressed by various wants. "Some," as St. Bonaventura says, "hastened thither, moved by the force of calamity to lay their sorrows at the feet of Jesus. Others came to desire some grace and especial mercy, knowing that the heavenly Father can refuse nothing to his Son. Others were constrained to fly thither to proclaim their gratitude, and to pour forth the love of a thankful heart, knowing that there is nothing so worthy of being presented to God as the sacred body and blood of the eternal victim. Others pressed forward to give glory to God and to honour his saints, for it is in the celebration of these mysteries of love that we can pay worthy homage to his adorable majesty, and testify reverence for those who served him. Lastly, others hastened on the wings of charity and compassion, for it was there that they could hope to obtain salvation for the living and rest for the dead *." Thus to the thirsty pilgrims through the rocks of the desert did the fountains of water appear. Thus did the generation of those who sought justice receive benediction from the Lord, and mercy from God their Saviour.

CHAPTER VI.

The monuments as well as the history of the middle ages in almost every page furnish some proof or indication of the love which men of all classes entertained for the sacred offices of the Catholic Church. Although

* De Reformat. Hominis Exter. cap. 82.

high mass used to be celebrated every day in many monasteries *, and the canonical office regularly sung in every cathedral and even parish church, still the affection of the laity prompted them to make many foundations for the multiplication of offices which are monuments not a little curious of the spirit which then animated society. The seventy-one parish churches in Venice, were equal to cathedrals in structure, and in respect to the riches of the sacred vestments, and other ecclesiastical ornaments not inferior †. With such fervour did the inhabitants of that city attend to the celebration of the Catholic ceremonies, that more than 200,000 pieces of gold were annually given for pious works, both men and women contributing. It was a custom for pious laymen to agree together to found prebends in different churches, as in those at Paris mentioned by Lebeuf, of St. Thomas du Louvre, and of St. Honoré. In the church of the Magdalen, the canonical hours with high mass were celebrated every day according to the foundation made by the will of Stephen Nyvert, a merchant of the street of St. Denis ‡; and Nicolas Fillon, a citizen of Paris, founded a chapel in the church of Auteuil, on condition that the chaplain priest should keep a school for the boys of that place and of Pacy, and should conduct them every evening to the church for the benediction; and he founded also a school for girls, whom the mistress was to conduct in the same manner §. In the seigneural chapel of the church of Mery-sur-Oise there was a foundation made by Anthony de Saint Chamand, Seigneur de Mery, for a priest to say four masses each week, and to instruct the children, who were to be conducted every evening to the church to sing there the anthems in honour of the blessed Virgin and of St. Anthony, and to pray for the king and the Archbishop of Paris ||. In the church of Essone, in the same diocese, there is an inscription in Gothic characters to record the foundation of a benediction to be given between six and seven in the evening of Easter day: the founders are Nicole Bossart, Avocat in

* Bibliothec. Cluniac. in 1707.
† Italia Sacra, Tom. V. 1176.
‡ Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, I. 11.
§ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. III. 10.
|| Id. Tom. IV. 197.

Parliament, Seigneur of Champeueil, and Jane Ferron, his wife. Another inscription records that their daughter, widow of Guibert, Avocat, has founded in 1601, "An O filii et filiæ *." Claude le Pelletier, Controller General and Minister of State, after quitting the court and retiring to reside in his Castle of Villeneuve-le-Roy, founded a benediction and complin every evening in the parish church, at which he used himself constantly to assist †. There was a foundation also in the church of Neufmoutier, of a sermon on All-Saints' day, after the vespers of all saints, to be a commemoration of All Souls, to prepare the people for the devotion of the following day ‡. Guillaume Foucault, founded in the Cathedral of Evreux, the solemn office of St. Agatha, with a general procession every year to commemorate the deliverance of that city from the army of the Huguenots which took place on that day §. In the ancient monastic charters also we find many foundations by pious nobles, who desired that certain psalms should be recited publicly at particular hours, as in that which was at the monastery of St. Martin, at Tours, which prescribes that after prime should be sung the psalm, "Ad te levavi oculos meos ||." But without multiplying these instances unnecessarily, let us now take a few particular examples from the history of the ages of faith of the love which the laity evinced for the divine offices; and who will not be struck with admiration at the majestic portraits which they furnish of the great and good men of Catholic times? Truly in their love for the sacred offices we behold the power of that religion, which in days of early persecution could constrain the wife of a Roman Emperor secretly to quit the imperial bed like an adulterous woman, in order to hasten to the assembly of the poor, to seek Jesus Christ at the altar of an obscure martyr, among the tombs, and among men who were proscribed and despised; for so we read of the Empress Prisca and her daughter Valeria, who used to repair secretly by night to pray in the catacombs, not daring to incur the fury of Galerius. It was a maxim of the Pythagoreans never to

* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. XI. 148.
† Id. XII. 138. ‡ Id. XIV. 238.
§ Hist. d'Evreux, p. 324.
|| Bernier Hist. de Blois, Preuves II.

turn from the road in order to visit a temple, because the worship of God should not be conducted by the way as a matter of secondary importance *; and this dictate of natural reason was obeyed in the middle ages with a consistency that admitted of no obstacle from the conventional forms of civil life, and with a fervour that indicated the presence of those rites which according to the voice of ancient prophecy were to afford delight to kings. Alfred, that model of heroes and of wise kings, used to observe hours of devotion both night and day, like a monk, reciting prayers and psalms. He never let a day pass without assisting at the divine offices. He used to visit churches at the first crowing of the cock, and to prostrate himself at the foot of the altar, beseeching God to grant him purity, and deliverance from temptation. It is recorded of Clodoald, son of King Clodomir, that "he preferred being present in the choir singing the divine praise to hearing the vain words of men †." King Robert of France, besieging Melun, on the festival of St. Hippolytus, contrived to enter the town in disguise to assist at the office. This is the king who is said to have composed a prose and some responses which were adopted by the Church ‡. The high tower of the Castle of Amboise was built by the governor, in order that he might see from the top of it the tower of St. Martin, of Tours, for whom he had a singular devotion §. The love for the divine offices induced many kings and nobles to convert their palaces and castles into churches. Thus Pepin changed his palace at Angely into a church and abbey under the invocation of St. John, which gave rise to the town of St. Jean d'Angely. Clovis, in like manner, gave up his palace to form the church of St. Geneviève, and Hughes Capet converted his house into the church of St. Bartholomew; Robert gave up his to form the church of St. Nicholas, and Henry I. abandoned his to erect the priory of St. Martin des Champs ||. King St. Louis assisted every night at the nocturns in the holy chapel.

* Jamblich. de Pythagoric. Vita, cap. 18.

† Mabillon, I. 1. Act. O. S. Bened. 136.

‡ Chronic. S. Bertini, c. 33, apud Martini Thesaur. Anecdot. Tom. III.

§ Duchesne, Antiquitez des Villes de France, I. 499.

|| Id. II. 182.

The bells used to toll every where to summon all the faithful to church at that hour, which custom prevailed till the time of King Charles V. Philippe-le-Long made an ordinance concerning the discipline of his palace, in which he declares that he will attend to no business until he has assisted every day at the holy sacrifice of the mass. This was the custom in England in the time of Lydgate, as we learn from his advice. "And than every daye whan ye shall go to do ony thynge aske this question of yourself, wheder art thou goyne, whyder ye be in the way of virtue or wyckedness, folowynge Cryst or the Devyll, in the way to heven or to hell. If it may be, here masse every day, for by that ye be made the more able to do al good workes in the day folowynge, and prosper the better in every thing *." Charlemagne, unless prevented by indisposition, used to rise regularly in the night for matins †, and assist at the office, wearing a long pallium ‡. His chapel, with its relics, ornaments, and numerous clergy, served with as much splendour as any cathedral, followed him on all his journeys, an example which was imitated by his successors and even by petty seigneurs. By means of a diptyche which contained paintings or carved imagery in a folding tablet, every one could arrange his little oratory on a journey, and have it always with him; for the number was comparatively small of those barons, who as was said, "were more delighted with the barking of hounds than with the melody of celestial hymns §." King Louis VII. on the coast of Asia Minor, every day fighting against the Turks in person, used on his return each evening to desire that vespers and complin should be sung before him. The kings of France used solemnly to preserve in their oratory, and even to bear with them to war the cap of St. Martin, thinking that it would be a protection to show honour to the relic of such a friend of God; from which cap Ducange, following the monk of St. Gall, derives the word "capella." That no class of men might be exempt from the consolation of the divine mysteries, mass used always to be said in prisons on Sundays

* Lydgate, the dyctasy of goostly helthe.

† Eginhard. in Kar. M. c. 26. ‡ Mon. Sangall. I. 33.

§ Ionæ Episcop. de Institut. Laicali, Liv. II. c. 23. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.

and festivals, and generally by monks of an adjacent monastery. In our age, indeed, Silvio Pellico mentions that it was not till after a long time had elapsed, that by the remonstrance of Father Stephen Paulowich, the unhappy prisoners in the Spillberg had permission to hear mass. "We used," says he, "to be conducted strongly guarded, and placed so that we should not draw the attention. A Capuchin friar used to say mass. This good man used always to finish with an oremus, and to implore our deliverance from bonds. When he came to the altar he used to cast a piteous look on each of the three groups, and then remain a long time with his head stooped in prayer. Most sweet and pleasant it was to us to hear the chant and the organ which accompanied it *." Cardinal Pacca, however, says, that while he was confined in the fortress of Fenestrelle, there used to be more masses said in its chapel than in any cathedral of Italy, in consequence of the number of captive priests. But to return to the churches. Time would fail me were I to tell of all the emperors, kings, high nobles, and magistrates of free cities, who used to place their chief delight in hearing the sacred office. Maximilian I., Charles V., Ferdinand III., Philip IV., Louis XIII., and many illustrious counts of the empire, are remarkable examples. From reading the diplomas and observing the deeds of the Norman princes in Sicily, it would appear that their chief joy on having expelled the Saracens was derived from being able to restore and perpetuate the solemn celebration of the sacred mysteries. Roger, duke of Calabria, in his grants to the church of Agrigentum, appeals to his having ordained episcopal churches throughout Sicily †. This illustrious prince built and endowed innumerable churches. Gaufridus relates that to that of Troinensis he gave vessels of the altar, and more vestments than sufficed to the clergy, besides candelabras, crosses, texts, and bells of melodious sound. "To whom," cries he, "unless to this great prince, are we indebted for the sweet melody of chants, for the words of the sacred law, and for the celebration of divine worship?" In general, the ancient diplomas to churches are all characterized by the spirit expressed in that granted to the church of Palermo, in the eleventh century, which begins by observing that all men whom God hath made

* Le mie Prigioni, cap. 80. † Sicilia Sacra, I. 695.

partakers of earthly government should attend to the ecclesiastical and divine mysteries much more than to the pleasures of the world *. In fact, the celebration of the divine worship seems to have been ever uppermost in the mind of these Norman deliverers of Sicily. Count Roger, in the first year of his kingdom, having sailed from Naples with three ships for Sicily, was assailed by a furious tempest off Salerno, which during two days exposed him to the most imminent danger of perishing. In this situation he made a vow to God, that on the first shore at which he should arrive safely, he would erect a church in honour of the Saviour, where the divine mysteries might be offered up for ever. Shortly after, on the feast of the transfiguration, the wind becoming favourable, he reached in safety the port of Cefalu, which was then an obscure town, the name having been derived from its former position on the summit of a steep rock which projected into the sea. At the foot of this rock, which is washed with the sea waves, he built a church to St. George, and at the corner of the rock he erected the votive temple to the holy Saviour; adorned it with antique columns, and curious mosaics, and conferred upon it the dignity of an episcopal see †.

The admiration of king Conrad, on arriving at Salzbourg, when returning from the Holy Land, was elicited by the extraordinary splendour of the sacred vestments, and the venerable aspect of the devout wearers in that cathedral: and on his departure, wishing to testify the satisfaction which he had derived from his visit, he esteemed it the most honourable testimony to declare that he had never seen a city in which the worship of God, day and night, was celebrated with such solemnity and magnificence ‡. Henry the Liberal, count of Troyes, who was born in 1127, had been called so on account of his munificence to the churches. In 1157 he founded and built the canonical church of St. Stephen at Troyes, adjoining his castle, for seventy-two canons, who were to perform the divine offices in plain chant and good music, to glorify God for ever. Besides this, he founded and built the canonical churches of Sczane and of St. Quiriace at Provins, and also ten other churches of canons, besides a number of hospitals. He so loved the clergy that he used to call

* Sicilia Sacra, I. 74. † Ibid. II. 793.
‡ Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 252.

the canons, filios meos, capellanos meos, prebendas meos. This magnificent church of St. Stephen served as the chapel of the counts of Troyes. Count Henry loved it as much as he did his own flesh. There was a tribune which looked upon the high altar, to which there was an ascent by steps from the interior of his palace, and he used to come there sometimes, with his family, to hear the divine office, but generally he used to descend and sit below with the canons, chanting along with them, and wearing his habit of red velvet, and a collegiate cap of the same material, covered with precious stones, which was preserved in the treasury of that church till the revolution *. So, also, adjoining the church of the abbey of St. Martin, at Séez, there was a building in which the dukes of Alençon used to be lodged when they came to seek edification with the monks. Beneath this building there was a particular chapel into which these lords used to descend in order to assist at the office of the night. There was to be seen the tomb of Duke John I., slain in the battle of Agincourt. These dukes had given the monks a house at Alençon †.

In the chapel of the Duke of Burgundy there used to be high mass sung every day and also vespers. Within the castle of Blois the divine offices used to be celebrated in two chapels of ancient foundation. Even within the walls of castles, which were rather places of defence than of courtly life, the divine offices used to be daily celebrated. Thus within Dover Castle, the ruins of a very ancient church are still seen, in which it was expressly ordained that a long peal was to announce the singing of matins, and that three masses should be said daily, for the governor, the marshalmen, and the soldiers; and the presence of the three chaplains was required at the celebration of high mass, before which no priest was permitted to leave the castle. Falco II. count of Anjou, under Louis IV. used to sing in St. Martin's church with the clergy, sitting in the choir as honorary canon. The same is related of Richard II. of England, and of Ferdinand of Spain. St. Helwige, duchess of Poland, and St. Elizabeth, daughter of the king of Hungary, are also

* Desguerrois Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 293.

† Recherches Historiques sur la Ville et le Diocèse de Séez, par D'Orville, 52.

recorded as having taken delight in hearing the divine offices solemnly sung. Witichend relates of Mathilda, the mother of Otho the Great, that "every night she filled her chamber with melody and with all kinds of divine song, for she had a cell next to the church in which she used to repose a little, and from which, rising up every night, she used to enter the church, although she had singers and chanters within her cell and before the door, who praised the divine clemency. King Dagobert's fondness for assisting at vespers is learned from the romantic circumstance connected with the sweet voice of Nantilda; and the general disposition of the laity in this respect may be learned from a reference to their liberality to the choirs of churches, as in the instance recorded of Ulric Engelbrecht, to whom the cathedral of Strasbourg was indebted for the first organ placed in it, in the year 1260.

Nor are later ages without examples of the same disposition. Louis XIII. composed motets which were performed in his chapel. During the siege of La Rochelle, in the absence of chanters and musicians, he worked night and day to note the first and second vespers of Pentecost, that all might be ready for the festival; and in his last illness, he composed a De Profundis which was sung in his chamber at the moment of his death *.

Christine de Pisan, whose language is always so picturesque, speaks at great length on the love which the French princes of her time evinced for the sacred offices. Of Louis, duke of Orleans, son of Charles V. she says, "Il a trés bien continué en dévocions, oroisons, à l'esglise estre longuement, et à oyr et dire grant service; bonnes gens et dévotz aime et voulentiers ot leur enseignemens, comme il appert par la fréquentacion qu'il fait chascun jour par long espace en l'eglise des Célestins, où a couvent de sains preudeshomes servant Dieu, et là ot le service; de laquelle fréquentacion est impossible que son ame et ses meurs n'en vaillent mieulx, et que Dieu en ses fais ne lui soit plus propice." Every day, with his own hand, he gave large alms, especially during the time of the passion of our Lord, when he used to visit the Hostel Dieu and the poor sick people †. Of the emperor Henry also she relates an anecdote that shows what

* Castil-Blaze, Chapelle-Musique des Rois de France.

† Livre des Fais, &c. Liv. II. chap. 16.

attention he paid to having the office celebrated with all possible grandeur. "The emperor," she says, "who greatly loved the offices of the church, and had pleasure in hearing them celebrated with solemnity, desired on one occasion, that a certain deacon who had a remarkably melodious voice, should sing the gospel. The deacon excused himself from complying, and when the emperor then commanded him to obey, he refused point blanc. The emperor, to whom it was intimated that the deacon had possibly rendered himself unworthy, by some secret act, desiring to try his constancy, ordered him to be threatened with imprisonment unless he complied, but in vain. It was then announced to him that he should be sent into banishment. The clerk immediately arranged his few necessary objects and departed. The emperor having sent after him, received him on his return with these words, "You who have feared more to offend God than to incur my anger, are worthy of being reputed according to your merit. I wish that you may have the first bishopric vacant, but from henceforth beware how you involve yourself in such a dilemma *."

The wise and heroic grand master of the Teutonic order, Luther of Brunswick, in the fourteenth century, had such a love and regard for church music that he used to be often found singing in the choir in the midst of the monks; and in founding the school of Kœnigsberg he required that on all festivals, and when it should be necessary, twenty-six of the scholars should be sent to the church of the old city to assist at the sacred song, and at the procession †, and a similar regulation was established in the school of Elbing under the same order ‡.

The minstrel of the ages of chivalry has often occasion to allude to this love of holy offices. Thus, in the Lord of the Isles, even light Edward says to Bruce, that while pondering in anxious mind to find a proper messenger to bear his written mandate to Cuthbert on the Carrick shore:

> "I chanced, at early dawn, to pass
> The chapel gate, to snatch a mass."

And how beautiful is that sudden memory of sacred rites which comes upon the passenger in the hasty bark:

* Livre des Fais, Liv. I. chap. 35.
† Voigt Geschichte Preussens IV. 519. ‡ V. 384.

"They paused not at Columba's isle,
Though peal'd the bells from the holy pile
With long and measured toll;
No time for matin or for mass,
And the sounds of the holy summons pass
Away in the billows' roll."

Whoever has lived in a Catholic country, will readily understand these feelings, and be able to supply other unnumbered instances. At Freyburg, passing after sunset by the churches when the doors were closed, I used to find several persons kneeling without in silent prayer, with their faces turned towards the sanctuary. St. Cassemir, the royal youth of Poland, used privately to lie prostrate on the earth before the doors of churches during the most inclement nights, imploring the divine mercy. Venantius Fortunatus exhorts his reader to press with his lips the threshold of the blessed Apollinaris, alluding to the basilica of Classe *: and in fact, I have frequently in Italy seen persons approach softly and kiss the portal of churches—affecting act of a natural piety! Ulysses on finding himself in Ithaca, kissed the ground; and these poor thirsty exiles recognized in the gates of the sanctuary the entrance to their celestial country.

After what we have seen, one can understand how, during the middle ages, the most dreadful calamity that could befal a people was an interdict, which deprived them for a time of the consolations of public worship, and caused a cessation of all the ceremonies and pomps of devotion. It would be difficult perhaps at present to conceive adequately the grief of men on such an occasion; for in such spiritual ages, no material interests were deemed comparable to those of the intellectual nature. When an event of this kind occurred in France, in the reign of Philip Augustus, numbers of devout persons left their country, and passed into Normandy and Brittany, where, as fiefs of England, the ceremonies of the church were not interrupted. The most destructive visitations of Providence caused no interruption to the divine course of the ecclesiastical year. On Friday, the 9th of January, the first concussions of the dreadful earthquake of the year 1693 were felt at Catana. On

* Italia Sacra, I. 327.

the 11th, the whole city was suddenly overthrown: temples, monasteries, palaces, and other edifices, buried under a mighty ruin eighteen thousand citizens. The few canons of the cathedral who survived, immediately erected a wooden church, and there recited the ecclesiastical offices; Peter Moncada, one of the senators who had escaped, having, with his new associates, spared no pains to assist them, in order that nothing might be wanting to the solemnity of the sacred functions *. One hundred and fifty years before, when the Syracusans believed that their whole Peninsula was about to be overwhelmed, while the citizens were fled to the rocks and caverns, on the sacred night of the nativity, the bishop and the clergy celebrated mass, and discharged all the holy offices, in a ship which was stationed near the shore †.

The establishment by law of the modern heresies, operating like a perpetual interdict, caused numbers of devout persons, of every condition, to go into voluntary exile, leaving England and Germany for countries where they could enjoy the solemnities of religion, in the same manner as many of the inhabitants of the south of France, in an earlier age, had fled into Spain to avoid the Albigenses. St. Joseph and the Blessed Mary used to go every year up to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover; and if they made this long and painful journey to obey the law of Moses, it was no marvel that devout Christians should engage in distant journeys to find a Catholic sanctuary. Those O'Neils, those Douglases, and others, whose tombs we find in the abbeys on the continent—exiles from their country through love of the divine temples, and for their faith—might have said with the heroic defender of the Heraclidæ, πόλις μὲν οἴχεται, ψυχὴ δ' ἐσώθη ‡. In all ages, there have been unnumbered instances of that love and constancy so beautifully described by the French poet, when he represents one whose pleasure consisted in presenting the incense or the lights at the altar, in hearing them chant the infinite grandeur of God, and in beholding the pompous order of his ceremonies; and who preferred being an exile, rather than to remove to the palace of kings, where he

* Sicilia Sacra, I. 566. † Id. I. 640.
‡ Eurip. Herac. 14.

would behold those who followed other rites, and invoked another God. If the hill from which Boabdil took his last view of Granada be known among the Spaniards by the name of the Last Sigh of the Moor, that from which a Catholic beholds, for the last time, the land where, like the magi of the East, he is leaving Jesus and Mary, and returning to his own country, which has rejected the light of faith, may well receive a mournful appellation. No trial was greater, than when sickness prevented persons from joining the assembly of the faithful. Madame Elizabeth du Chevreul, in her last illness, being unable, through weakness, to leave her chamber on Palm Sunday, though she ardently desired to assist in the church, said with great humility, "It is true, I am not worthy to bear the palm: this honour belongs only to those who are conquerors over sin *."

It is curious to remark how some modern poets stumble with regard to the consolation which attached devout Catholics to the divine offices, as where Sir Walter Scott describes the dejected Clare on having access to the holy altars to assist at mass; and adds, that it was nevertheless dearest to her wounded heart to spend her hours alone †. From reading which few words we only infer with certainty, that he did not know in what manner the religion of the middle ages acted upon the heart of man.

But if even ordinary kings and warriors cherished this affection, in common with the lowest of the people, for the divine offices of religion, how do we suppose they were loved by men of the highest intellectual cultivation and of peaceful habits—by poets, philosophers, and those endowed with the noblest conceptions of art?

Do we not remark how the bare mention of the offices of the Catholic Church instantly raises up, in every mind enriched with antique lore, the images of a Dante, a Tasso, a Thomas More, a Guercini, a Michael Angelo? and revives the memory of the great scholars and philosophers of Italy, such as Marsilius Ficinus and Angelus Politian, whose dispositions in this respect are attested by history; on all of whose tombs might have been inscribed, four times, the letter D, which is so placed upon

* Vie d'Elizabeth Rauquet Dame du Chevreul d'Esturville. Paris, 1660.

† Marm. VI.

the sepulchre of John Theopolas, in the basilica of St. Mark at Venice, to express the sentence ever on his tongue—"Domine, dilexi decorem domus tuæ *." At the time when Urbino, resorted to by such a multitude of noble and learned men, possessed such attractions that no one was considered sufficiently learned, or to have attended sufficiently to his intellectual cultivation, who had not spent some time there, it was not forgotten that in that church the divine worship was celebrated with more splendour and perfection of sacred music than almost in any other†.

Would you learn how these illustrious men lived and divided time? Observe that admirable painter, Guercini. He used to rise early, and pray and meditate for an hour. Then he would go to mass; after which he used to work till dinner. At sun-set he went again to some church, and then returned home to sketch till supper. Such was his life.—Petrarch, in reply to the Cardinal de Cabassole, says, "Your letter found me in a languishing state, so weakened by fever, that I am obliged to be carried to the church, though it joins my house."

Methinks I need not multiply these instances, to show in what light the divine offices of the Roman rite were regarded by men of every class and country, during the ages of faith. Here is abundant proof, that the common voice of mankind would have applied to the Catholic Church the words of the prophet, "Hæccine est urbs perfecti decoris, gaudium universæ terræ."

On a former occasion it was remarked, that a familiarity with the sacred offices of the church, tended to diffuse a poetic influence through society; and after what we have seen in the progress of our inquiry, methinks no one can be inclined to doubt the justice of that position. Reserving, however, further remarks on this head till we have seen the whole grandeur and beauty of the ecclesiastical course, let us pause at present to observe the many beautiful points of view—vistas as it were—through the obscure wood of antique history, which opens upon us from the spot on which we now stand. For in the first place, from the single fact of the church offices being thus loved and cultivated, remark what an important conclusion must be drawn with re-

* Italia Sacra, V. 1342. † Id. II.

spect to the intellectual character of the middle ages, and with what an answer it supplies us to one of the most insidious objections of the modern sophists. They tell us, that in the Catholic Churches there was too much ceremony for an intellectual people. We are now enabled to see at first sight how prodigiously and profoundly false is this famous objection. Certainly, if "Wisdom," as the ancient text affirms, hath ever literally "built for herself a house," here, in the Catholic temple, that mystic edifice is found. These men either understand not or care not what they say. For an intellectual people! Let them say rather for a sensual people,—

> "In understanding, harden'd into stone,
> And to that hardness, spotted too and stain'd *."

What! is it an injury to the understanding when the sight is employed as a medium of instruction? the sight, so essentially an organ of the intelligence, that in every language of the world the expression for understanding is derived from the term which signifies its degrees? No, certainly; but where habits of sensuality exist, all ceremony in religion will seem not only hateful, but in a philosophic sense, ridiculous. To enjoy the ceremonies of faith, and fully to feel their tender mystery, the heart must be inflamed with desires of invisible good, the reason, for the time at least, unclouded, the imagination struggling to be free from every thing that defiles and debases—the whole man thirsting after justice, either in the purity of innocence or in the sincerity of penitential sorrow. The world, therefore, rejects the symbol as it rejected Him whom it represents. It cannot receive them; for the love of the world hath not invisible eyes, by which spiritual things can be discerned. It neither sees them nor knows them. Hence the Church, feeling this necessity, constantly prays, that "what her children celebrate with a solemn office, they may attain by the intelligence of a pure mind †;" and that "ever fixing their thoughts on reasonable things, they may perform the things that are pleasing to him ‡."

* Dante, Purg. XXXIII.
† Post Com. 1st Sund. after Epiph.
‡ Collect, 6th Sund. after Epiph.

Dear to all, excepting to the worshippers of matter, who must indeed esteem them frivolous and empty things, the sacred rites of the Catholic Church are, in an especial degree, calculated to charm an eminently intellectual and learned people; because, to mention only one of many reasons, "the more thoughtful and genuinely poetic a mind is, so much the more formed and historical will be its religion," as Novalis, with profound justice, remarks *. Are men historians, philosophers, musicians? What a mine of treasure do they possess in the Catholic ritual? In relation to the former, how many curious things are observable in the liturgy, which recall interesting circumstances and events of ancient times? Why are the titles and names of the authors omitted in the lessons read by the church on holy Saturday? An historian will tell you that it was so ordered lest the catechumens, coming from among the Gentiles, might scorn when they heard the names of Hebrew authors, such enmity existed between the Gentiles and Jews †. Thus to the learned, not only was there an original sanctity and grandeur, and an inherent charm in the liturgy, but many things that were at first only common and accidental, were hallowed by time, and rendered doubly attractive by the power of historical and philosophic associations. Besides, did not the smallest thing acquire a dignity from the mere fact of its catholicity and universal usage by the church? These vestments are not only holy from religious motives; assuredly they are majestic and venerable from the historical and poetic idea connected with them: but when Lord Chatham called upon certain members entitled spiritual of the House of Lords, to interpose "the unsullied sanctity of their lawn," the allusion might assuredly have been heard either with a stare or a smile. Nor let any one imagine that the learned would regard these things with different eyes when they found themselves in places of rustic simplicity, as if there were a possibility of their finding the Catholic Church disarmed, and disglorified under any circumstances of humiliation. Not to speak of the divinity which ever guards it, the majesty with which it is surrounded at all times—even that majesty,

* Schriften. II. 305.

† Hugo de St. Victor, de Ecclesiasticis Officiis, Lib. III. c. 24.

in respect to the present world, which it has acquired by the tribute of so many sublime and kingly minds, so many saintly and heroic defenders—serves it instead of the tongue of an Augustin or the sceptre of a Charlemagne. The spirits of Austin, Ambrose, Gregory, Bede, and Fenelon, are within these humble walls. If you enter them, you will imagine that you behold there an Ignatius or an Alfred, the palms of martyrs, and the offering of kings. Fear not the contagion of vulgar minds from being associated with the vulgar in these Catholic rites. Although the vulgar, as Silvio Pellico remarks, can and ought to love them, it is not true, that in consequence they become a vulgarity *. The immense benefits of the Divine goodness, have, in fact, to use the words of St. Thomas, conferred upon the Christian people an inestimable dignity. Think not that the person of that rude illiterate priest can in any manner diminish the force of such impressions. Not to observe how false may be your estimate in supposing him such, observe that the Catholic ritual is not depending for its effects upon men. It is not at the mercy of any person, or capable of being counteracted by the folly or demerit of its ministers. In all essential parts, the qualities of the priest as an individual passed for nothing. The chasuble literally, like the charity of which it is the symbol, covers all. Persons of highly cultivated minds, and interiorly philosophic, were not in the position in which Apollodorus stood, who besides one man (Socrates), considered all teachers as wretched and despicable persons, against whom he felt inclined to rail as often as he heard them †. They never felt as if they suffered indignity by repairing to the Catholic Church on the wildest and farthest shore of Christendom; for they knew that in the meanest chapel in the most desolate region of the earth, they would meet with the same mystery as if they were to enter the basilica of the Vatican. Before the altar and the vested priest, they recognize not the man, but the prophet; while in regard to things subordinate, the wisdom and the exquisite fitness of the divine offices were every where the same. To obviate, however, the possibility of error, the ecclesiastical canons required that "scholastics should be carefully admonished, as Christians clothed with humility, not to

* Dei Doveri degli Uomini. † Plato, Conviv. 1.

despise those who they know avoid vice of manners rather than of words; that they should not presume to compare an exercised tongue with a chaste heart, or to laugh at any priest or minister of the Church who should be guilty of a solecism or barbarism in offering up prayer to God *." Here then one may remark what an unfounded assertion is that of the moderns who suppose that in the Catholic Church men of learning and genius constituted a small initiated class like the philosophers of heathen times, who in secret nourished a profound contempt for the public discipline, and that the clergy did not permit all men to be instructed in the same mysteries, but followed the example of Pythagoras, who suited his lessons to his hearers, calling some Pythagoreans and other Pythagorists, in the same manner as men used to say attics and atticists, to express the genuine disciples and those less perfect who should imitate them †. Whether or not they conceived this idea from feeling conscious of what takes place in their own communities, in which rationalism from the very first really constituted a similar class, is a question that may be left to their own consideration; but to suppose that a learned Catholic is in relation to the crowd of the faithful what the philosopher was to the heathen multitude, is an error that nothing can excuse. A mere knowledge of history is sufficient to convince any one accessible to conviction, that the Catholic religion was not a sect of philosophy. The sages of the middle age inverted the definition of the Stagyrite, believing with the multitude, while in point of grace and eloquence of development they spoke as the few. A Roger Bacon, an Anselm, a Richard of St. Victor, a Thomas Aquinas, saw in the sacred rites precisely the same thing as was seen in them by any simple peasant or page of a baronial castle, who recited his chaplet, without being able to follow the prayers of the priest. But more than this is true; for sages and men of deep philosophic minds, there is a peculiar want unknown to the common race of men, which the ritual of the Church was eminently calculated to supply. The human soul, in proportion as it attaches itself to God, and acquires a thirst for justice, becomes more averse to every

* Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars VI. c. 383.
† Jamblich. cap. 18.

thing like change or uncertainty. If not supported by its immortal hopes, intolerable would be its anguish on account of the alterations which are continually taking place in visible objects and in every thing with which it is in immediate contact. The Catholic religion in an admirable manner administered consolation to it in this state, through the medium of material and in themselves mutable things ; for it taught the curious and inestimable art of symbolizing nature, and it furnished it with an altar which was one spot in the visible world, exempted like the faith of which it was the emblem, from this necessity of change. View these old hermits in their caves, having nothing but an image of our Lady and an altar with a book. What a peaceful symbol is here of an immutable and supremely blissful state? Well not only would many a king, like Richard, have given their gorgeous palace for such a hermitage, their figured goblets for this dish of wood, their subjects for this pair of carved saints, and their large kingdom for this little grave, but in imagination all the master minds of the middle ages, all the great intellectual guides, within the domain of art, aspired to this condition and attained to it internally even amidst the vicissitudes and disorders of a troubled life. They gave this direction to their intelligence, not through a reckless disdain of the Creator's bounty, or an unworthy softness of soul, but from a reasonable and just conviction, that by so doing they confined, concentrated their desires for the present within the sphere of symbols, and so escaped the shocks and fluctuations of the world's destiny. With eyes fixed upon the cross their view seemed to open into eternity. Possessing this one point of rest they no longer sought to look abroad over the wide and universal theatre ; for they would have only felt oppressed by the spectacle of that immense nature : but viewed as symbols of the immutable and invisible good, neither upon the beautiful prospects of an extended horizon, nor upon any flower which embalmed their path, did they fear to indulge too fixed a gaze. Art, literature, science, dismissed them to traverse not to rest in the material world. But to renew these blossoms which decked the altar,—to see revived these symbolic lights which sparkled over it,—to perfume it with the odour of incense,—to behold it gilded with the gladsome beams of morning, or shaded with the sombre livery of the departing day,—these were the things which kept

their souls as it were in presence of the ineffable and immutable felicity of the Eternal Existence. It is true the revolving seasons caused even here a show of change; for the hue of holy vestments varied with the object of each day's commemoration; but these were only tones which belonged to one universal harmony, and varied symbols of a constant joy.

Against the terrors of death too, that greatest of changes to which our flesh is heir, this love for the ceremonies of faith provided men; for though all the pomp of worldly magnificence must fail, the affections associated with the holy solemnities of the militant Church, with her processions, her stoles, and palms, would endure for ever in the heavenly Jerusalem. Let no one imagine that I am explaining the history of the middle ages by referring to principles which were not in reality then received and understood. Subtle and abstract as they may appear, they are nevertheless professed in those very documents of ancient times which one might have supposed would have been exclusively occupied with considerations of a practical nature. Witness the words of the diploma granted to the church of St. Saviour, at Messana, by Count Roger, the pious and brave king, the protector of Christians, as he is styled in the title. "Because," saith he, "the things of the present life are corruptible and mortal, and like titles are changed from one to another, the lovers of religion meditated a certain wondrous mutation of these things by the right hand of the Most High according to the psalm; and employing all their study in order that they might remain firm and eternal, they found no other method excepting by erecting divine temples, and by dedicating to them and so returning to God their possessions. For thus it comes to pass that by the unceasing hymns and lauds which are offered up in them, God is worshipped and glorified without intermission, and they gain for themselves a memory of eternal beatitude and constant prayer. Therefore, our tranquillity, following this example as a certain primitive rule, hath made this divine and sacred foundation, and hath built this temple on the promontory of the port of Messana to the glory and praise of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*." We find the same sentiments expressed along with the donations to the

* Sicilia Sacra, II. 972.

church of Anglona, in the year 1231. "Although things of men prove frail and decay with length of years, there are nevertheless some things to which men can impart a perpetual stability, namely, those which are dedicated to the divine worship, and attached to the heritage of God with men *."

The love for the sacred offices not only indicated a thoughtful and an intellectual people, but also men of pure and virtuous or penitential lives. Thus the historian says of Otilo, Duke of Bavaria, in the eighth century, "that being moved to compunction by divine love, he began to build and enlarge churches, and to love the servants of God who served them †." It may be observed, that it was the general character of all the chants and anthems of the church to be a repetition of those high lessons and awful menaces which we read on the very stones, and marble, and windows of her temples, which reminded the unjust in language still more awful than that of Æschylus, that there was a spirit which followed him to whatever land he journeyed,—that even by dying he could not be liberal, that he would not be too free in death,

——— *θανὼν δ'*
οὐκ ἄγαν ἐλεύθερος ‡.

and which in every form of majestic symbol seemed to proclaim that great truth, "venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos et mortuos." Truly I can see great advantage resulting to the citizens from those terrible sounds of the choir as well as from the majestic countenances of angels and prophets, and even from the horribly gay demoniacal imagery which surrounded it; for the solemn exclamation,

"Quem patronum rogaturus,
Cum vix justus sit securus,"

is not less impressive than that perilous passage represented on the tomb of Dagobert, in the Abbey of St. Denis, where the poor king, naked amidst an infernal crew, stands with supplicating arms raised, while a demon seems alternately to lift and return the crown upon his head, as if by that scornful play to make

* Italia Sacra, Tom. VII. 81. † Germania Sacra, Tom. II.
‡ Æschyl. Eumenid.

him feel more acutely the vanity of his former ambition. Pius the Second says, that the sculpture in the Cathedral of Orvieto, by artists of Sienna, representing the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the Saviour, the punishment of the damned, and the rewards of the elect, was worthy of Phidias or Praxiteles *. The chants and lessons of the Church must not be separated from this visible development of the same truths which they announced, and assuredly the men who courted the influence of such objects and sounds could not be abandoned to impenitence or indifference. Moreover, independent of high intellectual causes, there is on mere moral grounds a close connection between affection for the ceremonies of faith and purity of heart, not to add even austerity of life: for the conscience of men of sensual or luxurious habits would be oppressed with so intolerable a sense of the inconsistency of their interior, with all that was submitted to their senses, that they would instinctively turn away from them. Whatever contributes to lower men in their ideas of the dignity of human nature, has a necessary tendency to cut off ceremonial from religious worship. When in the minds of men generally the type of animal is substituted for that of spiritual beauty, the foundation of the whole ritual is undermined, and the superstructure must inevitably fall. Then, indeed, are cowls, hoods, and chasubles, reliques, beads, indulgences, but trumpery, only fitting embryos and idiots, and proper objects to be the sport of Milton's scornful winds. Vice, as the arch leveller, is the true cause of the liturgy being despised. Who will invoke the saints, when he scorns their example? Who will pray for the dead, when he feels himself in mortal sin and incapable of performing any meritorious work to benefit himself? Who will believe in the real presence in the eucharist on earth, when he wishes that there should not be a God reigning in heaven? Who will venerate relics, when he has no faith in the virtue of martyrs? and when he believes that the spirit with the body dies? Who will join the procession, when he seeks only the spectacle of vanity? The mass of mankind, indeed, are but little aware of the secret motive whether good or evil which actuates them; but unless the hunger and thirst for justice had been at least in the commencement experienced in some degree or other, we

* Lib. IV. Comment.

may be sure that the divine offices would never have been perpetuated or frequented. The reason why they seem insipid to so many persons must be sought for in the abundance of external consolations which prevents them from feeling the want of interior. It is in the church that the words of the evening song are continually verified, that while the hungry are filled with good things the rich are sent empty away. Accordingly, without any premeditated intention of verifying such remarks, but merely from an accurate observation of facts, we find the writers of the middle ages ascribing generally in a continuous sentence, a desire of justice to those who evinced affection for the divine offices. Witness the words of Gaufridus, when speaking of Roger, Duke of Calabria, son of Robert Guiscard, who says, that he began to love just judgments, and to follow justice, and to frequent the church, assisting with devotion at the sacred hymns * "You lovers of justice," says Gregory the Ninth to the citizens of Padua, "magnanimously defend the churches, and nourish them in the sweetness of liberty †." Many parts of the solemn ritual had also a close connection with the spirit and peculiar manners required by the Catholic religion, as innumerable instances might show. Where the love of comfort and corporal indulgence had superseded the love of sacrifice, men would not be inclined to stand during the long interval occupied by the chanting of the passion; we should see them on that occasion following the Jews, "Et sedentes servabant eum." Where men were taught to forget the sacred humanity of our Lord, and the graces of his blessed mother, and not to feel that at each yearly commemoration of the passion, the scene was in a manner actually passing, in vain might the church demand "quis est homo qui non fleret?" No tear would stand in any eye, but every one would be seen turning over mechanically the pages of his book in search of some new food for the insatiate craving of an empty mind. Certainly to a loaded conscience the rites would give no pleasure; for every beauty in the Catholic Church is only beautiful from an analogy with the beauty of the soul: and without the remembrance of having traded with the talent entrusted to him, man would not be willingly reminded, though in strains of

* Sicilia Sacra, notit. I. 55. † Italia Sacra, V. 445.

ever such sweet harmony, of righteousness and of judgment to come. "Our Lord," says Father Avila, "is accustomed to reward at his altars what has been done at a distance from them. Therefore, without a holy life in the world, you must not expect graces in the church *." "Te decet hymnus, Deus," says the Psalm. "But where?" asks Cardinal Bona. In Sion: in Babylone: "non decet." Our hope is founded in that city of Jerusalem. He who sings with this hope, though his body may be in Babylon, in heart he may sing in Sion, saying, with the Apostle, "our conversation is in heaven," but he who is devoted to earthly desires, being an alien to sacred harmony, cannot sing hymns from the songs of Sion †. But what skills it to seek proof where the adversary bears testimony against himself? The members of the earthly republic acknowledge that they find no pleasure in the offices of the Church. What is the unanimous complaint of the moderns, but that of the condemned spirits in Milton:—

——— "This must be our task
In heav'n, this our delight; how wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid!"

The Catholic church had not the Herculean festival of the Syracusans, the celebration of which was to be rendered compatible with their plans of sanguinary vengeance against the Athenians, when they proposed sending a perfidious false intelligence to the unhappy Nicias, who was to be advised to postpone his departure till the next day by certain companions of Hermocrates, who were to visit his camp as friends, and give their counsel, that on the day following they might all be cut off. It would be idle to object an unpremeditated and accidental coincidence celebrated in the annals of retribution: all history attests that the Catholic festival was the harbinger of peace and charity, of forgiveness and amendment of life. "The oil of mercy," says St. Ambrose, "shines in the solemnities of the Church ‡." In fact, he who was in mortal sin, and who should appear at the celebration of mass, without having the earnest desire to escape from that

* Epist. XL. † De divina Psalmod. 361.
‡ In Ps. 119.

state, was deemed guilty of a sacrilege and of adding sin to sin.

That part which is entitled the secret, is so called, not because said secretly, but because it used not to be said until those had retired who had no right to assist at the sacrifice. Secreta a secerno. Nay, even in the fifteenth century, persons whose manners were at open variance with the sanctity of the Christian law, used to provide for their being absent from home on Sundays, for they dared not appear at mass *.

"Let no Judas assist," says St. John Chrysostom, "no Simon, no avaricious man. If any one be a disciple let him come, for he saith, cum discipulis meis facio Pascha." Let no inhuman person approach, no cruel man, no unforgiving man, no impure person: this is the mystery of peace." In the ages of faith, men knew nothing of a religion which merely consisted in being corporally present in the church during half an hour on festivals of obligation. "I beseech you," says St. Chrysostom, "do not pay attention only to this, in what manner you come to the church, but see rather in what manner returning thence to your houses, you carry away the medicine which is proper for your infirmities; if not all at the same time, at least let it be part to-day and part to-morrow, so that, at length, you may secure it all †."

Of the Catholic nations in ages of faith we might assuredly say, in a high philosophic sense, and with far greater justice than was affirmed of the Athenians, that they "knew no other feast besides that of doing what was right." Καὶ μήτε ἑορτὴν ἄλλο τι ἡγεῖσθαι, ἢ τὸ τὰ δέοντα πρᾶξαι ‡.

Clemens Alexandrinus remarks that the ancient sages required men to pray aloud, not from supposing that the Deity could not hear a silent prayer, but lest men should address prayers to heaven which they would be ashamed that other men should hear §. When men went out of Egypt they accordingly heard a language which they knew not. They came to the Catholic church to beg temporal blessings. Pestilence is spreading terror into the ranks of the impious and brutish crew. For once

* Monteil Hist. des François, Tom. IV. 375.
† Hom. 29. in Act.
‡ Thucyd. Lib. I. 71.
§ Stromat. III. 26.

they would cry for mercy to heaven. Lo the priest invites them: they begin to repeat the words of supplication, Deus qui non mortem—but why do they suddenly cease, why turn pale? Alas in what a dilemma do they find themselves! They had forgotten that the church in demanding temporal blessings, always implies that those who offer it are of the number either of the just or of the penitent, or of those who wish to have the grace of penitence, and now they feel themselves already rejected. Ah, well may their tongues faulter and refuse to pronounce the words "sed pœnitentiam desideras peccatorum." They have no part in what follows, "populum tuum ad te revertentem propitius respice," but the deprecation of that scourge of God's wrath must sound in their ears like the direful hymn of the avenging ministers, which enchains the soul and dries up the life in the veins:

δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρ—
μικτος, αὔων βροτούς *.

Again, the number of men who loved the sacred offices of the choir, is an index to determine the number of those who loved peace; for who could love the assemblies of the faithful, and at the same time be glad that they should with each other war—

> "And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
> So oft in festivals of joy and love
> Unanimous?"

That love argued too, that they cultivated habits of meditation, and that they gave themselves leisure,—that they knew well, though they had not heard Bacon, that although men should refrain themselves from injury and evil acts, yet the incessant and sabbathless pursuit of a man's fortune, leaveth not that tribute which we owe to God of our time†. They suffered not mercantile industry to impoverish their souls, for they had learned to believe of their Creator, that not to irksome toil but to delight he made us, and delight to reason joined. The immoderate application of the moderns to material objects, is incompatible with the love of these offices; for, as the ascetic justly

* Æschyl. Eumenid. 345.
† Advancement of Learning.

says, "insipida fiunt omnia devota Christi mysteria convertenti se ad exteriora et inania * ;" and, as he observes, "too much occupation in external things is a great impediment to internal, and cools men for things of heaven." "What avails it," says St. Bonaventura, "to observe a sabbath of one day, if we do not make our life a sabbath by reposing in God, and by seeking our peace in the love of his perfections? If our hearts are at the mercy of every worldly interest, we may suspend our manual labours on the seventh day, but we violate no less the great eternal covenant which binds our soul to God †." The very idea of prayer supposes leisure, for "the parts of prayer," says a writer of the middle ages, "are preparation, reading, meditation, thanksgiving, oblation, petition. Preparation is twofold, remote and proximate. Remote, is the avoiding the occasion of distraction and the entrance of cares, or rather, it is the avoiding sins and a worldly habit of thought without the sanctuary. The proximate consists in the consideration of the divine majesty, inspiring reverence and love ‡."

Lastly, the love for the divine offices was an evidence of the simple and noble manners which belong to a course of life in harmony with nature's laws; and, in fact, during the middle ages, the number was immense of those men of desire who seemed to experience, at the bottom of their hearts, a fainting and a mortal disgust, which nothing could relieve but the mysteries and ceremonies of faith associated with the spectacle and meditation of nature. In the primitive church, mass used to be said before day, in order to avoid the violence of the Pagans; and even when there was no danger of interruption, we find the holy fathers inviting men to hasten to the church at the first light §. Similarly, in the foundations of masses made by devout lay persons during the middle ages, it is common to find the charters specifying that they are to be said at break of day ||. Philippe Augustus, in founding a daily mass for the soul of his father, Louis VII. specifies that it shall be said

* Thom. à Kemp. Epist.
† De Reformat. Hominis exter. Cap. 64.
‡ Instructio Novitiorum, Pars III. c. 2.
§ Rheinwald Die Kirchliche Archæologie. 187.
|| Lebeuf Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, VII 36.

early in the morning, "singulis diebus mane:" adding, "in order that no occupations of the harvest time may interfere with the assistants." Vincent de Feore, of a noble and ancient family at Linas, founded a mass every Sunday, to be said in the church there after the second toll of the bell for matins, for the convenience of travellers *. At four o'clock mass used to be said in the churches of London. We read that Madame de Chantal, in the regulation of her lord's castle of Bourbilly, provided that the mass of foundation in their chapel should be said at such an early hour every morning that the labourers, as well as the servants of the household, might assist at it before going to their work †. It was at six o'clock, at mass, on St. Ignatius's day, that, for the first time, I saw the illustrious author of the Martyrs and the Genius of Christianity. Pasquier mentions in praise of the first president De Thou, that whereas his predecessors used to postpone prayers till the mass at ten o'clock, he, on the contrary, used always to hear mass the first thing on arriving at the palace of justice, where he was the first to arrive and the last to leave ‡. The very title of the altare pigrorum, such as that in the cathedral of Paris, where mass used to be said on Sundays at so late an hour as eleven §, is a sufficient indication of what was the general practice of the middle ages: and when to provide against unavoidable delays, there was granted a privilege to have mass said after the meriden, the complaints of abuse were all grounded on the same just views respecting the division of time. "It is impossible," says Sotus, "that such a regulation should not merit blame, which serves the purpose of those who convert the night into day, spending it over cups and dice, and similarly, the day into night, consuming it in sleep ||."

Christianity had renewed the face of the earth and had reconciled men to nature. The Sybarites of old, would not allow a cock to be in their city, lest it should disturb their matutinal slumbers; but when Sybaris became an episcopal see, the symbol of vigilance rose over their highest towers, and there was no retreat within its walls

* Id. X. 191. † Marsollier, I. 47.
‡ Lettres de Pasquier, Lib. VII. 10.
§ Antiquitiés de Paris par Du Breul, Liv. I.
|| Cited by Benedict XIV. De Sacrificio Missæ, Sect. II. 54.

so thickly screened as not to be accessible to the solemn echoes of the matin bell.

The laity, in the middle ages, would have wondered to hear of him described in Athenæus, who for twenty years had never seen the sun rise or set; not because, like Hestineas, he had been leaning over his books, but through his luxury. We have no such portraits in chivalrous history or fable.

The twilight hour, and that beauteous vision of the setting sun, when its golden radiance illuminates the embrowned foliage, and fires the mountain's western side, were necessarily familiar to men who so loved the evening melody of the choir: and if the poet of the middle ages does not show his hero like Virgil's Æneas, when night and sleep leave him, rising up, and under the rosy light of the Eastern sky, repairing to the margin of rivers to invoke the nymphs, and pour water from his inverted palms, in honour of the naids, he conducts him at the first dawn through laurel groves, and rocks fragrant with flowers, to the hermit's chapel, where sleeps the symbolic wave of spiritual purification.—Gyron le Courtois and his companion riding through a forest, stop for the night at a hermitage. Next morning, at the hour of joyous prime, Gyron was asleep as if he had not slept all the night, so his companion awoke him; and when Gyron opened his eyes, and saw that the sun was already risen, he felt shame, and said, "Sire, nous avons trop dormy." Then they mounted and rode away *. The rule in Du Guesclin's time was to rise and sup at six, to dine and retire to rest at ten; and the old verse added a promise of life being extended to ten times ten, as the consequence of its observance. Thus the Thucydidæan expression, περὶ πρῶτον ὕπνον—the hour of first sleep—might have been then used in its original sense.

What lovely inspirations do the poets and painters of the middle ages derive from their familiarity with the morning! Enter this pavilion on the terrace, which limits the garden of the Rospigliosi Palace at Rome. The fragrant air is cooled by a fountain which plays amidst the orange trees. Behold the ceiling, on which is painted that glorious Aurora of Guido! What golden mornings this great master must have enjoyed before he could have

* F. XXVI.

formed such a conception of that joyous and resplendent rising of the chariot of the sun over the craggy mountains and the deep blue sea! The moderns are in general of Addison's opinion, in preferring men of the middle hours of the day, whom he calls the worthier part of mankind—men in whose countenances you see that they are at home, and in quiet possession of the present instant as it passes: but in the scholastic romantic ages, men of desires, men of early hours, were rather deemed estimable. Learning and religion both claimed them as more especially their own. Those who were studious either of piety or of learning, yielded prompt obedience to the invitation of Divine Wisdom, "Mane surgamus ad vineas! Videamus, si floruit vinea, si flores fructus parturiunt; si floruerunt mala Punica*!" and verified the fidelity of its promise, "Qui manè vigilant ad me, invenient me†." Men who did not rise with the morning to study Wisdom, could not have hoped to hear a judgment in their favour when philosophy and religion had a voice. Even the poet of old would have reproved them—

> ——————— "Et ni
> Posces ante diem librum cum lumine, si non
> Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis,
> Invidia vel amore vigil torquebere‡."

Dear to men of desires, to men who thirsted after justice, was that hour when they sing, "Jam lucis orto sidere:" the joyous prime—as poets of the middle ages call it—that pure matutinal hour which succeeds the darkness, and which is followed by the day—sweet to the eye from both regards, from the splendour of its lightsome beams, and from the still lingering mysterious air of night. The former are only as yet seen upon the highest points; the scene below is still obscure. There sound the hasty feet of the pious supplicants, who repair to the churches. They seem to have known by instinct that it is their hour: at whose approach, as Shakspeare says,

> "Ghosts, wandering here and there,
> Troop home to church-yards: damned spirits all,

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* Cantic. VII. 12. † Prov. viii. 17.
‡ Hor. Epist. I. 2.

That in cross-ways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon."

Full of religion is the delight which comes upon the soul with the balmy breath of hopeful morning! so beauteous from the solemn grey in which all things are still clad, and from the curious and orient colour wherewith the rising sun embellishes the eastern part of the sky. If we would not degenerate below our species, and even unbirdly prove, we should rise to salute the dawn. Yes, there is a sweet delight in feeling oneself alone with nature, screened yet from day's garish eye. Who does not love the early morning walk, before that tribe of saunterers appear, men incapable of doing aught, yet ill at ease, with naught to do? The hour is all too soon for fashion's train.—

"Artists are her's, who scorn to trace
Their rules from nature's boundless grace."

Little joy to them

"To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing, startle the dull night
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise."

But the tender sentiments of Catholic piety love the morning's prime, when, on his way aloft, the sun ascendeth with those stars that with him rose, when love divine first moved those its fair works; for then, with joyous hope, all things conspire to fill the soul*. When the sun is in the heaven, and the proud day, attended with the pleasures of the world, is all too wanton, and too full of gauds, to give it audience, there is something that checks and repels devotional feeling. But when we have watched through the darksome canopy of forest paths the "fairest of stars, last in the train of night, if better it belong not to the dawn;" when we have observed the earth giving signs of gratulation, and each hill, and heard the joyous birds singing in their leafy homes, and

* Dante, Infer. I.

felt the fresh gales and gentle airs, which waft odours through the woods,—then it is that the choral song sounds so truly ravishing, that we forget the reign of the body-world, of the prosaic world, which is in fact, during these golden moments, at an end: all is spirit and intelligence—all is peace—the divine poesy of a sanctified and blissful existence. Thus begins each day; and at noon one looks back to these first hours as if one had walked through Eden, and breathed the air of Paradise. One laments that it should not be always the dawn, and that Babylon should ever awake to recommence its wonted revels. It was so sweet to feel one's self existing without the presence of anything to distract or interrupt the peaceful transports, the bright visions, of the solitary soul. Then was removed the contagious spectacle of human vanity; the only glitter was from the golden crosses on the domes of temples, and from the lustrous beams which played upon the laughing wave. Then were hushed all the murmurs and discords of self-tormenting wretched men: one heard as it were the grateful song of youth, the hymn of nature, in primal innocence. How frequently has there been a divorce between nature and me; a momentary divorce! for I never felt that a reconciliation would be difficult. A little morning wind, a solitary wandering, a meadow or a wood, by sunrise, and between us all would be forgotten. It is these manners, belonging to the spirit of the Catholic religion, which enable men to repeat, with the conviction of experience, those encouraging words — "Repleti sumus mane misericordia tua: et exultavimus, et delectati sumus omnibus diebus nostris *."

So far we have considered the church offices in general. It remains for us, after the manner of the schools, to examine them in detail as connected with the seasons and festivals of the ecclesiastical year; which is an investigation from which no writer can be dispensed, who undertakes to supply a history of Catholic manners during ages of faith, or to philosophize respecting the men of desires, who endured the long, but not unpleasant thirst.

* Psalm lxxxxix.

CHAPTER VII.

The origin of the Christian festivals can be traced to the very cradle of the Church, although the exact and minute arrangement of the ecclesiastical year, as we now find it, was the gradual work of successive ages, which can never be said to be complete, inasmuch as the number of the eminent saints of God, who are the objects of commemoration, will not be complete until the end of this state militant on earth. "The devout Christian indeed," as St. Clemens Alexandrinus says of the Gnostic, "confines his adoration of God to no determined place, or festival, or day; but through all his life, in every place, whether alone or with others, he worships him *." Yet the Church has always believed that the Apostles instituted the festivals, of which the mysteries had passed before their eyes; in which number St. Augustin places the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost. "We do not incur the crime of those who observed days and months," says St Jerome, "by observing the festivals of our Lord and of the different martyrs, according to the traditions of particular countries; but, lest a congregation of people without order should cause a diminution of faith in Christ, certain days are constituted for our assembling in common. Not that one day is more worthy, but that, by the spectacle of a multitude on an appointed day, a greater joy may arise †." For a long time before the actual establishment of the festival which commemorates the mysterious fiat, the holy fathers had taught, and the piety of the people had suggested, that the happy moment of the incarnation of the Word was the source of all the graces of our Redeemer, and the beginning of all the mysteries of our redemption. The annunciation was celebrated in the fifth century, on the same day as at present. The sacramentary of Pope Gelasius II. proves its establishment at Rome before the year 496. In England, from the introduction of Christianity till the Pontificate of

* Stromat. Lib. VII. 7.

† Comment. in Ep. ad Galat. c. 4.

Pius VIII. it was devoutly observed as a holyday of obligation. The first trace of advent discovered in history is the ordinance of St. Perpet, Bishop of Tours, at the end of the fifth century, in which he enjoins in his church a fast of three days each week from the feast of St. Martin to that of Christmas, which rule became general in France in the seventh century after it had been prescribed by the Council of Mâcon, for the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, adding that the offices should be celebrated as in Lent. In the ninth century, advent was of forty days in France, as appears from the capitularies of the kings, though it was not of absolute precept, since the canonical law only sanctioned what was observed by the piety of the people, who had made it a law to themselves. This continued to be observed by pious persons in the thirteenth century; for it is expressly related of St. Louis, that he passed the forty days before Christmas in prayer and fasting: but the time of advent had then been limited to four weeks. In the time of St. Bernard, the order of Cluny was content with requiring a more rigid abstinence during advent, but without a fast*." St. Chrysostom, towards the end of the fourth century, says that the nativity of our Lord had been celebrated on the twenty-fifth of December in the West for a long time, by an ancient tradition†; and the Greeks and Easterns were the more anxious to conform to the custom of Rome, because that church must have known the day, since the acts of the famous capitation of Augustus were carefully preserved there.

The festival of the circumcision became solemn in the sixth century. The Council of Tours, in 566, ordains, that the chant of litanies should, on the first of January, be opposed to the superstition of the Pagans, and that the mass of the circumcision should be celebrated.

The festival of the purification is generally supposed to date from the time of Justinian; but Pope Gelasius had certainly celebrated it in Rome thirty years before the accession of that Emperor. The procession of this day with lighted tapers, is one of the most ancient of those observed by the Church. The taper, thus solemnly blessed, as an emblem of the light of faith, was afterwards carried to the house of the person who bore it in

* Hist. des Fetes de l'Eglise, 8. † Hom. XXXIII.

the procession, that in the event of his being taken out of the world in the course of the year, it might serve him for that purpose at his death.

"Domus dei pœnitendo præparatur." The institution of Lent has always been considered by the holy Fathers * as derived from apostolical tradition, though it was not till the middle of the third century that it was required by a law. On the first Sunday of Lent, as of advent, the ancient monks of the desert, and the fathers of the Carmelite order in later times, used to assemble and hear an exhortation from the superior, after which they would retire into the separated hermitages, in the depths of the wilderness. "For," say the Fathers) "while the solicitude of this life is exercised in various actions, and severity of discipline relaxed, the hearts even of the religious must become defiled with the dust of the world; and therefore this institution of mystic days is divinely provided to repair the purity of souls, and to open to them the gates of Paradise. Hence, so early as in the sixth century, it was a general custom during Lent to make a spiritual retreat †." Thus the author of the Life of the Abbot of St. Mary Bodanensis, says, "But when, according to the custom of monks, the man of God, during Lent, used to live in his cell more secluded and more sparingly than usual, Lucretius used to visit him." So in the Life of St. Œmilian we read, "It was the custom, during Lent, to be content with a solitary cell, and not to see any one, unless some person familiar, who used to bring the necessary food." We read of St. Francis spending Lent in an Island in the Lake of Trasimene. St. Senoch used to be secluded from the festival of St. Martin to the birth of Christ, and during the whole of Lent. St. Marculf, abbot of Nantes, used every year to retire into a certain island, where he remained secluded during Lent. Bishops used to make these retreats. Samson and Palladius are examples. The latter used, during the holy season of Lent, to retire into an island of the sea for the sake of prayer, and to return to his people, who were ex-

* S. Hieronymi Epist. XXVII.
† Mabillon, Præfat in 1 Sæcul. Benedict. § 9.

pecting him in the church, on Maunday Thursday: and St. Gregory of Tours relates of the prelate Bercundus, that he used to spend Lent in divine contemplation in a secret remote place. Bede says of Eadbert, Bishop of Lindisfarn, that he used often to remain solitary, in a place remote from the church, where, on all sides, the roaring waves of the sea encompassed him; for he used to pass Lent in great penitence and prayer and weeping. The rules of Chrodogang, Bishop of Metz, prescribed to the canons, that during Lent they should never leave the cloister, except by necessity. St. John of Beverly, when a bishop, used during Lent to retire with some few religious men to devote himself to prayer and reading, in a secret spot in a grove, which was separated from his church by the river Tyne.

These solemn practices were no less in use with the laity, during the early and middle ages. It was to the people at large that St. Ambrose addressed these words at the beginning of Lent:—"Living in cities, let our minds be in the desert, that we may be refreshed with the celestial manna*." "Of what avail is your fast of Lent," asks St. Ambrose, "if at the same time you indulge in the luxury of hunting? It is a vain fast which debilitates the limbs, and does not free the soul from perdition. Do you suppose that he fasts, who at the first dawn does not watch in the church, and visit the holy places of the blessed martyrs, but rising up, gathers his little servants, who were perhaps hastening to the church, arranges his nets, and speeds to the woods and mountains, spends the entire day in hunting, and pursues the game with such ardour, as if the fast was ordained in order that he might hunt? We prescribe abstinence to the body, in order that the soul may refrain from vices; but what room is left to such a man for devotion and prayer? Is he not angry or elated according as he succeeds in the chase? Is he not severe and cruel to his servants, forgetting that they are Christians and his brethren—men who have put on Christ, and participated in the same sacraments†?"

During the middle ages, the laity of all ranks devoted this season of the year to retirement and prayer. Thus did Alfred and Robert, and many other kings of England

* Serm. XXIII. de Quad. † S. Ambrosii Serm. XXXIII.

and France. "These are days which we ought to observe," says St. Bernard, "days full of piety and grace, on which the minds even of wicked men are moved to penitence: for such is the power of the sacraments administered on these days, that they can rend even hearts of stone, and soften iron breasts *." By the statutes of the holy Abbot Adalard, in the year 822, among the days on which all persons belonging to the service of the monastery of Corby were to be exempted from labour, was the first day of Lent, in order that they might have time for renewing their confessions †: and the very title of Shrovetide in England indicates that this practice was general among the people. "During Lent, we must meditate day and night," says St. Cæsarius of Arles, "and fill our hearts with the sweetness of the divine law. If any one should be so much occupied, as to be unable to attend to the divine Scriptures before his repast, let it not shame him to hear something read from them while he is at table ‡."

St. Basil, in the fourth century, speaks of Lent as follows:—"There is no church, no continent, no city, no nation, no corner of the earth ever so remote, in which this fast is not proclaimed. Armies, travellers, sailors, merchants, though far from home, every where hear the solemn promulgation and receive it with joy. Let no one exclude himself from the number of those who fast, in which all men of every age, of whatever rank and dignity are comprised. Angels draw up the list of them that fast. Take care then that your angel put down your name: desert not the standard of your religion." We read in the Saxon chronicle that in 640, Erkenbert, King of Kent, who overturned all the idols in the kingdom, the first of English kings, appointed a fast before Easter §. In the time of Chrodogang, Bishop of Metz, there were three Lents regularly observed by the faithful people, namely, before the Paschal feast, before the nativity of St. John the Baptist, and before Christmas, at which times the laity went to confession and communion, and as the bishop adds, "qui plus fecerit, melius

* S. Bernardi in Cœna Domini Serm.

† Statuta Antiqua Abbatiæ S. Petri Corbeïensis apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IV.

‡ August. Append. S. 140.

§ 37.

facit *." In fact, during the middle ages there was more danger of giving scandal by requiring too little than by imposing too burdensome an obligation. Petrarch, whose ordinary diet was fruit and herbs after the fortieth year of his age, used to fast every Friday on bread and water. St. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury, used to eat nothing on Friday but dry bread and water; and in the chronicles of chivalry, the same practice is ascribed to several renowned knights. In the twelfth century, the laity of all ranks led as abstemious a life as many religious congregations. Peter, the venerable Abbot of Cluny, proposes their example in this respect even to the monks of his order. "These men," saith he, "abstain from flesh for the sake of God every Saturday. The majority of the laity abstain similarly every Wednesday, and some of them even every Monday; whereas the monks of Cluny, in many places, observed only the abstinence of Friday †." So strictly was Lent observed in early times, that we find St. Ambrose saying, that if we should omit abstinence for a single day, we should violate the entire Lent ‡. During the middle ages, we learn how rigidly it was observed, from what St. Bernard says, "I beseech you dearly beloved, receive with all devotion this Lenten fast, which not only the abstinence commends, but much more the sacrament. How can that be burdensome to us which the universal Church bears along with us? Hitherto we used to fast only till nones; now, like ourselves, all kings and princes, clergy and people, nobles and plebeians, rich and poor, all together fast until vespers. I do not ask what monk, but what Christian will not observe this fast devoutly §?" Till the twelfth century, the fast of Lent was never broken before the evening, though at other times it was usual to take the meal after nones. Not even water could be drank excepting at the time of the repast. What was saved by fasting was to be given to the poor. Abstinence from all usual pleasures was also required, but on the Sunday Laetare there was a certain intermission of this austerity. In the baronial as well as in the episcopal hall, there was always a Calendar sus-

* Mabillon, Præfat. in III. Sæcul. Bened. 6.
† S. Petri Ven. Abb. Clun. Epist. Lib. VI. 15.
‡ De Quadrag. Serm. XXIII. § Id. Serm. III.

pended in which was marked in great letters, the fasts of Lent, and Advent, and the vigils and ember days, with the abstinences of other times. In the Limousin it was usual on Ash Wednesday, to place over the chimney a tablet, composed of as many letters as there are days in Lent, and every evening one letter used to be effaced. The inscription was, "Mors imperat regibus, maximis, minimis, denique omnibus." Thus at Easter, the whole was effaced. Montiel gives a curious document which proves that meagre dinners in the middle ages were really such. The account-book of Master James Bernard, of the expenses of the hotel of the king, in the year 1536, mentions having paid William du Moussay, the king's cutler, for two knife cases, each holding six knives, all pointed, to serve at table on meagre days. King Charles V. and Charles VIII. had leave to take milk and cheese in Lent, on the ground of their bad health, but to make amends they were to perform some pious works. The Xerophagie, or food consisting of dry fruits uncooked, which is now reserved for the last week, was of common usage, and is the most ancient of all modes of fasting; but it was never prescribed to the Western Church, excepting on Good Friday and Holy Saturday. The custom of marking bread with a cross on certain days is of great antiquity. St. Gregory the Great says, that it was the custom to sign the penitential bread with a cross, so that it might be divided into four equal parts *; and in the time of St. Benedict, the bread of four pounds being thus signed, was divided among four monks †. Machiavel does not esteem it beneath the dignity of his great history to relate, that when the Duke of Milan came to Florence with all his court, they gave an example of scandal that had never before been seen, for it being the season of Lent, without any respect for God or for the Church, none of the court observed maigre, and all fearlessly amused themselves at public spectacles ‡. By decrees of Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian, criminal trials were suspended during the whole of Lent §. The celebration of Palm Sunday is very ancient, and traced from Palestine, whence it spread through the East, till in the sixth century it was established in the West. In the fifth, the

* Dial. Lib. I. c. 2.
† Hist. Cassinensis, Sæc. III.
‡ Hist. Lib. VII.
§ In L. Quadrag. L. VI. de feriis.

monks and solitaries who had retired into the depths of the desert, after the Epiphany, for whose sake the deacon used to announce after the Gospel on that day at what precise time the Church of God would celebrate Easter, which custom still prevails, used always to return to their monastery to celebrate Palm Sunday, a festival which the Church hastily concludes to return to the passion. The Saturday preceding was called, "Sabbatum vacans," because the Pope was then occupied in giving alms to the poor of Christ, and in celebrating the "Mandatum," and, therefore, the day had no proper office *. Why the moderns should speak of former ages in terms of such disdainful pity on account of the importance which was attached to the universal celebration of Easter at a determined period, it would be hard to guess, if we were not accustomed to see proofs of their hatred for unanimity and order under every circumstance and in all conceivable relations. St. Ambrose, writing upon the right time of Easter, says, "Let us not fear to incur the reproach of the apostle, as if we were observers of lunar times. For it is one thing to observe, like Gentiles, at what age of the moon any work ought to be begun, that the fifth should be shunned, and that various days particularly the latter, ought to be noted as unfavourable †; and it is another thing to have regard with a devout mind to that day of which we read, 'Hic est dies quem fecit dominus.' This time we ought especially to know, in which throughout the whole world, the prayer of that sacred night is offered up to God ‡. Hippolytus, a bishop in the time of the Emperor Alexander, is said to have been the first to write a paschal cycle, which was afterwards improved by Prosper of Aquitaine and St. Cyrill, of Alexandria §. Philosophers still gaze with astonishment at the complicated machinery of the vast clocks of the middle ages which are found in cathedrals and abbey churches, as that of Strasbourg, in which are described astronomical laws connected with the ecclesiastical course by the movement of a wheel which makes its revolution in a year, and the golden number, the dominical letter, the

* Durandus Rationale, Lib. VI. 66.
† See Aristoph. Nubes, 1131.
‡ S. Ambros. Epist. Lib. X. 83.
§ Isidori Etymol. Lib. VI.

moveable feasts and the bissextile year, by means of another, which only revolves once in a century. The Ascension, one of the four most ancient festivals of the Church, has always been regarded as of apostolic institution. St. Augustin says, that it was celebrated throughout the whole world. Though with extraordinary pomp observed on the Mount of Olives, its solemn celebration was universal in the middle ages. We find St. Gregory VII. taking off the interdict which the monastery of Monte Casino had incurred, and stating his motive to be lest such a religious place should be deprived of the sacred offices on the approaching solemnity of the Ascension, which is venerable, adds the pontiff, throughout the whole world *. The festival of Pentecost was the fourth of these great solemnities which completed the commemoration of the chief events connected with the mysteries of human redemption; for the festival of the Trinity, which was not established at Rome nor in France till the fourteenth or fifteenth century, was not precisely included under that head †.

In the institution of the festival of Corpus Christi, the Church explains her own views in the lesson which is read during the octave from the sermon of St. Thomas of Aquin, which says, "It is agreeable to the devotion of the faithful, solemnly to celebrate the institution of so salutary and admirable a sacrament, that we may venerate in the visible sacrament the ineffable mode of the divine presence, and that the power of God may be praised, which operates so many wondrous works in the same sacrament; as also that for so salutary and so sweet a benefit thanks as most due may be offered to God." Next in solemnity followed those anniversaries of our blessed Lady, which had not been of necessity comprized in the former. The festival of the Assumption is clearly distinguished in the sixth century, and that of the Nativity was from early times one of the three birthdays which the Church celebrated, for to the precursor had been extended that honour which he shared with her and our divine Lord. St. Augustin says, that the faithful had received by tradition from the ancients the observance of the nativity of St. John the Baptist, and,

* Historia Cassinens. Sæc. VI. 2.

† Baillet, Traité des Fêtes Mobiles, Tom. II.

indeed, the Council of Agde, in 506, reckons it the first festival after those of the chief mysteries of our redemption: but that of St. Peter and St. Paul may be considered as of the highest antiquity and solemnity. Until a late epoch the birth of St. John the Baptist and the festivals of the Apostles, were holidays of obligation throughout Christendom. The invocation of the saints, as a means by which the names of all those who have been recommended to their prayers may be recorded in the book of blessed predestination, is a devotion coeval with Christianity, and that the anniversaries of their martyrdoms were observed in the first ages is an incontrovertible fact of history. To primitive times may be traced the cause and form of canonization. There were two opposite heresies respecting martyrdom: that of the Gnostics and Valentinians, who pronounced it to be useless and injurious to God, and that of the Marcionites who exposed themselves to it, through hatred of the flesh, the creation of which they ascribed to the bad principle. Therefore, when any one suffered death for being a Christian, an examination was instituted to ascertain whether he had entertained such errors, or were truly a martyr, and this is the origin of canonization *. St. Clement had established seven notaries in different quarters of Rome, who were to write down the acts of the martyrs on their trials before the tribunals. We see that from the fourth century, the acts of martyrs in distant regions used to be transmitted to the Roman Pontiff. "Ut moris erat," is the expression when a transmission of this kind is recorded to have been made from Trent, under the consulship of Stilico.

The Fathers of the Council of Cloveshoe, in 747, decreed, that through the course of the whole year, the nativities of the saints should be celebrated with appropriate psalmody on the same day as is prescribed in the martyrology of the Roman Church. Certainly in rejecting the authority of the Gregorian Calendar, it was hard to believe that the nations which embraced the new opinion, were actuated by a sincere desire of exercising greater caution in matters of religion, when we find them resolved to accept men as saints and martyrs on

* Benedict. XIV. De Canonizatione Servorum Dei, Lib. I. c. 2, 3.

the strength of quaint emblems and devices, begged, as Milton said, from the old pageantry of some twelfth-night's entertainment at Whitehall. Mabillon shows the great caution which was always exercised by the Roman Pontiffs with respect to the canonizing of saints, and even the zeal of councils in repressing the devotion of the people where there were not sufficient grounds to justify it *. The celebration of their anniversaries over their shrines is repeatedly mentioned in the oldest authors. Speaking of the relics of St. Stephen, St. Augustin says, "A little ashes collects such a multitude. Consider, beloved, what God reserves for us in the land of the living, when he attaches such benefits to the dust of the dead †." It is an historical fact, that the maxim universal with the fervent Christians of ages when men prayed for the dead, invoked the saints and celebrated their anniversaries, was this, "nihil nisi quod traditum est." This one fact is sufficient to show the impossibility of such doctrines having first sprang up in the second century, as the modern innovators affirmed. In the second act of the Council of Chalcedon, the Fathers cried out, "Flavian lives after death, 'martyr pro nobis oret.'" Therefore, at the time of the Council of Chalcedon, the custom of invoking the saints prevailed; and what then becomes of the Protestant resolution to subscribe to the first four Councils, those of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon? "At that table of the Lord," says St. Augustin, "we do not commemorate the martyrs in the same manner as others who rest in peace, that we should pray for them, but rather that they should pray for us that we may follow their footsteps ‡." St. Augustin refutes the calumnies of the Manichæans, who accused the Catholics of adoring dead men §. The feast of All Saints instituted partly to make amends for the unavoidable omission of many in the course of the year, it being impossible to celebrate a festival specially to each of such a multitude ‖, was established in the reign of Louis-le-Debonnaire, Pope Gregory IV. being in France in the year 835, and exhorting him to order its celebration throughout his states. All-

* Præfat. in V. Sæcul. Bened. §. 6.
† Serm. CCCXVII.
‡ Tractat. in Joan. LXXXIV.
§ Cont. Faust. Manich. Lib. XX. c. 21.
‖ Durandus Rationale, Lib. VII. 34.

hallow-tide comprises three successive days, devoted to great mysteries, the vigil of All-Saints which is a solemnity of affliction, the festival itself, which is a day of joy, and the day of All Souls, which is a day of prayer *. There were other seasons of devotion which seemed belonging more especially to a sphere of tender mysticism, such as those in honour of the holy cross, or commemorating local instances of mercy which the Church had thought proper to adopt for the general edification of her children, such as the rogations, instituted in the fifth century by Mamercus, Bishop of Vienne, at a time of general alarm, in consequence, as Sidonius Apollinarus, Bishop of Clermont, relates, of flames bursting out from the crests of mountains, while the walls were shaken by trembling of the earth, in which passage, as also in a sermon of St. Avitus, some natural philosophers have seen evidence of the existence at that time of volcanic eruptions in Auvergne, of which the traces are so evident †. The Church appointed the parts of the holy Scriptures which ought to be read at the different seasons of the year, and these divine lessons were presented to the faithful as of the greatest importance. Pope Gelasius arranged the order for the whole circle of the year. The Book of Kings, and those of Solomon and Job, were read after Pentecost till September; and then followed lessons from Tobias, Judith, Esther, Esdras, and the Books of Maccabees: thence till the nativity of our Lord the Books of Prophets were read, in order that men might be prepared for the coming of Christ. From the Nativity till Septuagesima, the New Testament was read, and the Epistle of St. Paul. From Septuagesima till Easter, days of penance and lamentation, the histories of ancient misery were related, from which we are redeemed by the blood of Christ. During the Paschal time, the apocalypse of the blessed John, and the canonical Epistles were proposed, that the contemplation of the last times might prepare us for our end. The Council of Carthage sanctioned the reading of the passion of the martyrs in the church on the days of their anniversary. Pope Adrian decreed, that such lives of the Fathers as

* Durandus, VII. 35.

† Sidon. Apoll. Ep. V. 14; VII. 1. S. Aviti Homil. de Rogationibus.

were composed by uncertain authors were not be read. The first who ordained in Italy this distinction of books from the Old and New Testament, was St. Eleucadius, Archbishop of Ravenna, who died in the year of our Lord 112. Charlemagne, as Sigebert relates in his chronicle, caused to be compiled by Paul, the deacon, certain lessons from the writings of the Catholic fathers, suited to each festivity, which were to be read in the churches during the year. St. Benedict prescribed that nothing should be read but the lessons of the Old and New Testament, with expositions from the most celebrated doctors and fathers of the church.

Such then was the course of the ecclesiastical year; such were its various stages and divisions; and methinks, before proceeding farther, here is enough to make one exclaim, with the philosopher of ancient Rome, "Verum admirabilis compositio disciplinæ incredibilisque rerum traxit ordo, quem nonne miraris *?" We may even remark, that not without a clear insight into the profoundest depths of the philosophy of life was it so arranged; for in this circle of the Church's seasons was comprised the circle of spiritual progress—the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive life, from the expiations of Advent, when the ecclesiastical year commenced, to the joys of the festival of All Saints, when it ended. The genius which presided over the whole arrangement of the ecclesiastical order, like that which constituted the noblest artists, a Titian and a Haydn, chiefly attended to the harmony of the whole together, and had more regard to the general effect than to the details.

Who has not remarked what a sweet poetic charm this divine course imparted to the different seasons of the few years allotted to mortals? who has not been struck with the afflicting contrast which is presented, if we turn from it to consider how they have been characterized in heathen or modern times? The Eleans used always to send feciales, heralds of the season, to the different states of the Peloponnesians. With the ancients in general, heralds were always styled a race hated of men; and assuredly, as far as relates to this particular office, those who supply their place in modern society, discharge a

* Cicero de Finibus, III. 22.

service which is in no way indicative of tender affection for humanity.

In a country where the Newmarket or judicial calendars have superseded the Gregorian, it may be truly said that wretched men only measure time like the ancients, by the sad calends *; for as far as real gladness of heart is concerned, there is not much difference between the spectacle of vanity and the punishment of the unjust. Significantly used the Prætors of Sicily to date the spring from the first flowering of the rose, for the emblem of luxury had no slight accordance with a cruel and oppressive administration. In the middle ages, the spring and autumn were associated in the minds of the people with the glorious festivals of the annunciation and of St. Michael. The memory of these days, indeed, is still preserved among the nations from which the Catholic faith has been removed; but what different feelings do they revive! and of what an opposite nature from those of faith are the exercises which they require! Whatever may have been the customs associated with them, in the estimation of our Catholic ancestors, they were days not of payment but of deliverance—not of trembling before an earthly judge, but of triumphing in the belief of a celestial Protector, bringing with them not insolvency and consignment to gaols, but works of union and the offerings of a grateful and overflowing heart; and O what a difference between beholding or enduring man's oppression, and commemorating, with hymns of transport, heaven's mercy! Between the inhuman severity of rich men to the poor, and the tender mysteries which redeem a world!

True, nature has her calendar, to con which with curious sense is no unpleasant task to those who love her. There is a quiet and an exquisite delight in watching for the swallow and the nightingale, to announce the return of beautiful days and serene nights—"for the turtle, and the swallow, and the stork, know the time of their coming, though Israel knoweth not the judgments of the Lord;" but must it not have been more impressive, more grateful to all the sentiments of humanity, nay more poetical, to have their approach announced by the sweet and solemn hymns of the holy church? The storms of equinox seem grander and more terrible things when associated with the festival of the archangel and the vigil of the dead. That

* Hor. Sat. I. 3.

winter itself may be loved, has been shown by poets who sung the delights of the beautiful season * ; but methinks the snows of December and the beauteous flowers of the genial summer, can impart to the imagination a higher as well as a more exquisite tone when they are considered in connection with the crib of Bethlehem and the eve of St. John.

When St. Theresa arrived at Salamanca, it was on the vigil of All Saints, of the year 1570. Here she was lodged in the house which had been procured for the new convent which she was about to found. It was now deserted and in disorder : during the night between the festival of All Saints and the day of the dead, finding herself alone with only one sister in the vast apartments of this house, but half furnished and imperfectly secured, lying upon some straw, which was always her first furniture, it is said that she suffered much from the fears of her companion. The incessant and mournful sound of the bells, and the remembrance of the lugubrious festival which was to follow, gave to that night a certain wild and poetical charm, which the interval itself, however favourable to romantic impressions, could scarcely have imparted.

Charlemagne, in giving German titles to the months of the year, named December Heiligenmond, in reference to the festival of Christmas ; and we find, during the middle ages, that the same spirit of reverence with all its associations, connected with the mysteries of faith, characterized the whole development of the popular mind in its minutest detail. Sailors used to speak of the Cyprian star, alluding to the feast of St. Cyprian, about which time the seas were generally tempestuous, and for the same reason mariners, in Catholic nations, still speak of the star of St. Simon and St. Jude, of St. Catherine and of St. Andrew, for these days are in a stormy season †. The poorest rustics were as familiar with the course of the ecclesiastical year as the most learned monk. In little country churches of France, I have observed tablets which used to be removed every Sunday, stating the saint who was to be commemorated each day of that week, and this was conformable to an express prescription ; for in the council of Sens, in 1460, it is enacted that there should

* Erycius Puteanus de Laudibus Hiemis. Virg. Georg. I.

† Macri Hierolexicon a Cypriana.

be a tablet suspended in the church, stating what was to be read or sung each day during the week, that every one might be duly prepared*, for nearly every day was "distinguished in the beautiful order of things." In Spain and Portugal, and Italy, the poor beggars in soliciting alms, are always heard to beseech the saint of the day to obtain a blessing on the passenger, especially if it be in the vicinity of a church placed under his invocation.

The arrival, indeed, of the great anniversaries, was an event of such solemnity that it was made to determine the whole course of human affairs, which from the eighth century, in the diplomas of Pontiffs and other acts, were dated according to the number of years which had elapsed from the incarnation of our Lord†. It was on these occasions alone that kings wore their crowns. Even William the Conqueror conformed to this usage, wearing his crown but thrice in the year: on the Easter festivals at Winchester, on Whit Sunday at Westminster, and on Christmas Day at Gloucester. What a thrilling sense does the mind experience at the announcement of any of the great seasons of the ecclesiastical year, made on the eve preceding! How many smite their breast, how many feel their eyes dissolved at the recollections which it awakens! At that moment, too, who is not reminded forcibly, that another wave of time's stream has wafted him nearer to the great ocean of eternity on which his frail bark will inevitably so soon be driven. But faith brings hope when nature would only find infinite mourning. Personal recollections are therefore dismissed, and, at that moment, all nations and the people of every clime, all the men on earth who compose the mystical body of Christ, are occupied with the same thoughts, and providing, as the church says, "that appropriate honours should precede the coming solemnities of their redemption." At Cluny, on the announcement of the festival of the Nativity, it was the custom to fall prostrate on the ground, to adore God for this mystery of grace.

How, let us proceed to ask, were these festivals celebrated? In the first place, they were always preceded by a vigil, which was observed as a fast, and that on two accounts; the one symbolical, the other practical,

* Concil. Senonens. cap. i. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. II.

† Cantelius Hist. Eccles. Metropolit. Pars ii. Dissert. i. c. 8.

with a view to positive advantage. The former is explained in few words by Father Diego de Stella. "In the feasts of the saints," he says, "the vigil cometh ever before the feast day, because they did always in this world fast and take pains. and, therefore, afterwards they must feast and be merry for ever. The worldly manner is quite contrary—they do first eat and make merry, and then after they do pay their scot, death cometh and maketh the reckoning for them*." "Multi tristantur post delicias, convivia, dies festos." After the world's festivals come sorrow and melancholy, and the blessed Dionysius, the Carthusian, says, "There is this difference between the good and the evil, that the latter wish to make a feast before the vigil, rejoicing temporally in this world, and therefore in the future world, they make the vigil for the feast which they made here, weeping eternally†. The practical reason for the vigil consisted in the effects which it produced in preparing the mind for the due celebration of the succeeding festival. "The feasts of the saints were preceded by votive fasts, because, (as St. Bernard says,) in many things we offend all; and it was not deemed safe by our fathers to undertake the celebration of any holy festival without endeavouring, by previous purification and abstinence, to be made more worthy and capable of spiritual joys ‡."

The abstinence of Saturday to which, as well as to Lent, St. Jerome ascribes an apostolic origin, and the cause of the non-observance of which, by the monks of the east, is explained by Cassian ||, was not only deemed decorous on the day when the church celebrates the sad repose of Jesus Christ in the sepulchre, and the sorrows of his blessed mother—that time, as Ives de Chartres says, "which seems to be an interval between sadness and joy," but it was also regarded as a useful provision to secure the early rising and the serene unclouded mind, which were required for the due sanctification of the Lord's day. Even the ancients could discern the advantage of this discipline, as when Horace says,

* On the contempt of the World, I. 108.
† B. Dionysii Carthus. Amat. Mundi Specul.
‡ In Vigilia S. Andreæ, Serm.
§ Lib. II. c. 10.

> ——— "Quin corpus onustum
> Hesternis vitiis animum quoque prægravat una,
> Atque affigit humo divinæ particulam auræ *."

and Milton furnishes an example of its effects when he represents Adam early waked, adding,

> ——— "So custom'd for his sleep
> Was airy light, from pure digestion bred,
> And temperate vapours bland."

Abbot Cosmas used to stand singing psalms and praying all night in the church and in his cell, from Saturday night till after sun-rise and the end of the canon on Sunday morning †.

"Be not ungrateful to our Lord Jesus; lament not that you fast, but weep rather that you fast so seldom. He who does not compassionate Jesus, hath not known Jesus; he who rejects fasting, knows not the cross."—These are the words of St. Chrysostom: and Drexelius says that abstinence is the most noble of disciplines among Christians ‡. These two points, therefore, fasting and abstinence, as closely connected with the spirit and manners of the middle age—as they are widely at variance with those which prevail at present—are entitled to a distinct place in the moral history of that period which we are attempting to supply.

The ecclesiastical discipline of the primitive ages, seemed a less formidable thing to the Gentiles than it appears to the moderns, with the greater part of whom it would be of far more importance to establish, if possible, the immortality of the organs that minister to corporeal life, than to prove the eternal existence of the soul. The ancient Greeks and Romans were content, on ordinary occasions, with one meal in the day, which they called cœnam. Isidore says that they were not accustomed to take the prandium §. Cicero, in the Tusculans, and Clemens Alexandrinus, in his Pedagogue, relate the saying of Plato, that men ought to be ashamed to saturate themselves twice a day. In the time of Hippocrates there seems to have been no certain rule, though generally

* Sat. Lib. II. 2.
† Sophronius Pratum Spirit. cap. 37.
‡ De Jejunio, Lib. I. c. 3.
§ Isidor. I. 20, Orig. cap. 2.

but one meal used to be taken in the day. Eustathius says that they ate thrice. The first was jentaculum, ἀκράτισμα, which was merely bread dipped in wine. Then followed the prandium, the merenda, and the cœna. No certain hour is assigned for the merenda. The prandium was taken at mid-day; the cœna in the evening. Yet with the heathens, living and eating were synonymous,

> "Sufficit in sextam labor horam, deinde sequentur
> Ut vivas numeri: littera ζῆϑι monet."

For the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth hours in the Greek were denoted by the letters Z. H. Θ. I. which form the word ζῆϑι, signifying live: a conceit which may almost remind one of the language of the moderns, who reverse the canon, "beneficium propter officium."

In instituting the different fasts and days of abstinence throughout the year, the Church, besides the particular motive of preparation for her solemn festivals, had in view the general object of forming men to holy manners, and also to a condition conformable to the mysteries which she had received. "There are men," says St. Chrysostom, "who seem to have come into the world only for pleasure, and that they might fatten this perishable body; as if their sole business in life were to prepare for the worms of the tomb a more abundant and succulent pasture. At the sight of their luxurious table the angels retire—God is offended—the demons rejoice—virtuous men are shocked—and even the very domestics scorn and laugh; but on beholding a simple and modest table, the Deity, angels, and men applaud—good men sit down to it—Christ himself, during his mortal life, took his place at a similar table. Such was that of the patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and of the just men who are gone before. They left sumptuous feasts to tyrants, and to men enriched by crime, who were the scourges of the world *." Thus, in her penitential season, the Church prays that "the dignity of human nature, wounded by excess, may be reformed by attention to medicinal temperance," and that, "purified by a holy fast, men may arrive, by the grace of God, with sincere minds, at the festivals to come." In fact,

* Hom. VI.

while the setting apart two days every week for abstinence, gave the involuntary slaves of the earthly republic a chance of escape from an uninterrupted round of Syracusan tables, destructive of health, as well as of intellectual and innocent enjoyments, the obligation of devoting forty successive days to a course of privation, tended to secure their total and permanent deliverance; for by obedience to this law, men were imperceptibly emancipated from the chains of custom, and even of necessities which had been thought to have become a part of their constitution; habits of effeminacy were broken through, and the general character was rendered manly, by means of the salutary endurance of privation. The objection, grounded on the severity of fasts, and the supposed injury caused to the human frame by abstinence, proves nothing but that the persons who produce it are accustomed to a life of constant repletion—which by Pagans would have been deemed disgraceful—and that they are, in point of sensuality, if not of heroism, of the mind of Ulysses, who says to Alcinous,

ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν δορπῆσαι ἐάσατε, κηδόμενόν περ,
οὐ γάρ τι στυγερῇ ἐπὶ γαστέρι κύντερον ἄλλο
ἔπλετο, ἥτ' ἐκέλευσεν· ἔο μνήσασθαι ἀνάγκῃ *.

But if fasting be considered in relation to medicinal discipline, its effects will be found favourable to the enjoyment of good spirits and of the free play of the mind, which necessarily conduces to the body's health, and that habit even renders it agreeable to the animal nature, is a fact that the sacred Scripture itself condescends to attest, saying, "Etiam ipsis jejunium conviviis dat gratiam dulciores post famem epulæ fient†." Cicero remarks the power of custom in this very point. "Aniculæ (says he) sæpe inediam biduum aut triduum ferunt. Subduc cibum unum diem athletæ: Jovem Olympium eum ipsum, cui se exercebit, implorabit: ferre non posse clamabit‡."

It was, however, no doubt, chiefly in consideration of moral consequences, that the Church regarded this law of fasting and abstinence as so important. The peni-

* Od. VII. 215. † Judith, cap. 1, 2.
‡ Tuscul. II.

tential season or the vigil, succeeding within moderate intervals, by reducing men's minds to a placid and serene state, disposed them for the principles of the Catholic religion during the rest of the year; whereas men who never experienced such privations, were morally, and even physically speaking, ripe for apostasy, because the passions are by corruption protesters against the law of God in every relation, and as it were, the natural enemies of the symbols and life of faith. Our Saviour chose not only to fast, but also to suffer the pain consequent upon fasting; which theologians remarked, to show the vanity of many of the pretexts for dispensations adduced by tepid disciples, to whom they applied the words of the Psalm, "In labore hominum non sunt, et cum hominibus non flagellabuntur. Ideo operti sunt iniquitate." The modern complaints respecting the injury sustained by the body in consequence of the discipline of the church, may suggest a painful comparison in reference to the heroism of the heathen sage, who, on being warned by Crito that he ought not to heat himself by continuing his discourse in proof of the soul's immortality, for that the executioner who was to administer the poison, had said that he ought to speak as little as possible, since the act of speaking would render his body in a state to resist the action of the poison for a long time, which would involve him in great additional suffering, for it might become necessary to drink it twice, or even thrice, replied only, "Do not trouble me with that man's advice: let him attend to his duty, and prepare to give me the poison twice, or if necessary, thrice. Change the subject *."

But if the advantage of fasting be admitted, surely, says the modern Hercules, you must admit that the obligation of abstinence was eminently superstitious and absurd! Δειπνεῖν με δίδασκε, would generally be a suitable answer to such an appeal †. Manzoni, however, shows more condescension, and says in reply, "The Church intends to give no precept which does not prescribe an action in itself virtuous, which does not conduce to purify, elevate, sanctify the soul, and in short, to dispose men for the accomplishment of the divine law ‡."

* Plato, Phædo. 63. † Aristoph. Ranæ. 107.

‡ Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica.

In prescribing occasional abstinence from flesh, as being an incentive to concupiscence, the Church did not sanction luxury in other kinds of food. "There are some observers of Lent," says St. Augustin, "more luxurious than religious, seeking rather new delights than chastising ancient lusts. They fast, not to temper their customary excess, but rather that by delay they may feel more immoderate greediness *." This was not to revere, but to mock the Church. She warned men from deceiving themselves by seeking more precious food under pretence of abstaining from the flesh of animals. "Restringendæ sunt deliciæ, non mutandæ," was her admonition †. During these intervals, when it could be done with justice, she desired that the rich might live like the poor; might for once suffer the labours of men; that having sinned with men, as St. Bernard says, they might for once be scourged with them, that there might be less ground to fear that they would be scourged with demons ‡: for that is the real secret of innumerable parts of her holy discipline. Indulgences, however, within the limits of permitted food, did not constitute a violation of the ecclesiastical law, though, by the consent of all theologians, it deprived men of the merit §. To witness the astonishment of the moderns whenever the wisdom of that law is defended, one might suppose that all men resembled the people of Beauvaisis and of Olonne, who would exchange, it used to be said, with greediness, an ox for a fish; and that the Shakspearian definition of an honest man were verified by universal experience. But without any want of due reverence, or any extravagant inclination to infer more than would be true from the observation, methinks a disciple in the school of Christ may very naturally and judiciously appeal to the facts of evangelic history, which records of his Divine Master, that he ate fish with his disciples, but no where that he ate meat, excepting the Paschal lamb. Abstinence is ridiculed, because, as Manzoni remarks, "the world abhors all penance, and pretends to be superior to what it would avoid. It is, however, only in the man diligent in the research of worldly contents of

* S. 210, de Quadr. 6. † Chr. S. 209.
‡ Serm. ad Pastores in Synodo.
§ Sardagna Theologia, Tom. IV. 308.

every kind, enemy of all humiliation and of all suffering, that this external expression of penance, observed pharisaically, is an isolated operation, so different from the rest of his life, that it forms a discord, which is laid hold of by the world to cast ridicule upon the things of religion; but if considered in connexion with the motives of the Church in requiring it, not only must this ridicule cease, but we must confess the beauty, the wisdom, and the importance of this law. It is a truth, as well known as it is humiliating, that the abuse of flesh influences the mind and degrades it. A series of grave, regulated, magnanimous, benevolent sentiments, can be interrupted by a dish, and in their place will be formed a kind of carnal enthusiasm, a sensual exaltation, which renders the heart indifferent to the greatest things, which destroys or weakens the sense of what is noble, and impels to sensuality and egotism*." By dainty platters, as Shakspeare remarks, the ribs are made rich, but the wits bankrupt.

Some men pretend that the ecclesiastical obligation tended to make men forgetful of the duties of the moral law; as if compliance with the laws of the Church were felt as affording them a dispensation for obeying those of morality. But Manzoni shows the weakness of this objection. "Take away the commandments of the Church! Will you (he asks) have fewer crimes? No, but you will have fewer religious sentiments, fewer works independent of impulse, and of a temporal end; fewer works directed to the order of perfecting souls, for which man is created†." If the Church invites her children to abstain, she at the same time calls upon them to pray, that "the observance which they exhibit corporeally, they may be able to exercise with sincere minds‡." Besides, in what page of history do we find ground for this opinion, which supposes a phenomenon in such contradiction to the universal voice of the intimate conscience of mankind? We read on the contrary of noble and impressive lessons delivered to men under the influence of violent passions, reminding them that it would be in vain to observe the ecclesiastical discipline during penitential seasons, unless the manners were made

* Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica. † Id. 220.

‡ Collect VI. feria after Ash Wednesday.

in all respects conformable to the spirit and intention of that ordinance. Albertus Grantzius relates, that the emperor Conrad, having found a rebellious and refractory brother in Henry, duke of Suabia, and being obliged to meet him in battle, Duke Henry was defeated, and obliged to fly into Pannonia to his relation, King Stephen. The King was displeased at such open and malignant contumacy. He resolved, therefore, to reprove his relative efficaciously but modestly: so on Good Friday he ordered his table to be served with flesh meats. Duke Henry expressed horror at such a banquet on that day, to whom King Stephen replied with a sweet and friendly tone, "I deem it a less evil to eat flesh on this day than contumaciously to rebel against a brother." This kind of admonition found a favourable hearer: Duke Henry was moved to compunction, and forthwith became reconciled with his brother. You ascribe this to the generosity of an individual? Nay, it was an act of strict obedience to the positive doctrine of the Church. "Bene jejunat, qui fraternas injurias pacifici pectoris lenitate dimittit*."

Having now seen what was the spirit of the vigil, let us proceed to inquire respecting the solemnity which followed.

The Church begins the day, in relation to fasting, like the ancient Romans, from midnight; but respecting indulgences and festivities, from the first vespers to the setting of the sun, on the day following†. With the Pagans, only certain particular days were said to be festal, or "dies feriæ,—sed Christianis et maxime clericis," says Walafried Strabo; "omnes dies in ferias deputentur‡." The word obligation, in the ecclesiastical sense, was not of familiar use during the ages of faith; for where devotion always accompanied a sense of duty, it was rare to find persons desirous of communion with the faithful, and at the same time of assisting in the public assemblies in the churches as seldom as possible. In countries like the Tyrol, where those ages may be considered as still in their course, the people generally assist at mass every morning, and at benediction every evening; and where such is the disposition of mens'

* Maxim. Taurin. § 43.

† Card. Bona, de Divin. Psal. xcviii.

‡ Walafried Strabo, de Rebus Ecclesiast. cap. 20.

hearts, it cannot be expected that they should be universally acquainted with the precise minimum required by the Church in regard to assistance in the public worship. Under such circumstances, the churches will be as full on festivals of devotion as on those of obligation; for as men are generally more consistent in regard to their feelings and affections than in their capacity of logicians, there can never be many who would voluntarily absent themselves on the purification, after having been present, through a sense of obligation, at the celebration of the nativity. However, as the circumstances of mens' relations with society, and the innumerable perturbations of life, must have always operated in preventing many of the most fervent disciples from assisting daily at the divine mysteries, the term obligation was used to designate those greater festivals, at the celebration of which the Church required absolutely that every Christian should be present, unless prevented by sickness, or other unavoidable hindrance.

Sismondi, and other modern writers, have declaimed on what they call the absurdity of maintaining that by disobedience to this law, men incurred the penalty of mortal sin; but they do not consider the banner under which this is ordained: "If," says Louis of Blois, "you disdain any one of the observances of our holy religion, however slightly important they may be, and if you transgress them voluntarily, you are not a servant of Jesus Christ*." "And is it possible," asks Manzoni, "that the Christian who would voluntarily abstain from assisting at the sacred mysteries on a festival, could be one of the just, who live by faith? Is not such an act the most certain proof of his utter indifference for Christianity? and therefore, is not the justice of that sentence of the Church evident, which pronounces it to be a mortal sin†?" The groundlessness of the displeasure evinced by the moderns, with respect to ecclesiastical obligations in general, would be evident if they would consider, that with our ancestors things were ordained and instituted for persons who had faith, and not for the indifferent. To retain men in obedience to the Church, it was not a necessary condition that she should command nothing:

* Guide Spirituelle, chap. 1.

† Osservazioni sulla Morale Cattolica.

nor was it received as a maxim, that the faithful were to be conformable to that multitude of persons who had practically ceased to believe in the mysteries of human redemption. The middle ages would have treated with contempt the doctrine of some of our philosophers, who affirm that, "in proportion as manners become corrupt, laws should be made weaker." "The Divine legislator of Christians," as Bonald well observes, "did not accommodate his laws to the inclinations of men, but repaired their inclinations by his laws. If he had not made his laws 'more perfect than men then could bear,' what laws would he then have given to the men and women who are described by Juvenal, Tacitus, Petronius, Suetonius, or Josephus, the last historian of the Jews? But it was not according to this modern principle that he considered man and society. Far from proposing to man weak laws, accomplices to his passions, or powerless witnesses of his disorders, he imposed them on him as a bridle, and opposed them as a barrier; 'perfecti estote.' 'Be ye perfect, as God himself is perfect *.'"

The observation of the first, instead of the seventh day, or Jewish Sabbath, originated in apostolic prescription, as we infer from its having been universal in the first ages of the Church. It is true the early Fathers are found remarking with Clemens Alexandrinus, that the seventh was a sacred number, not only with the Hebrews, but also with the Greeks; that Hesiod and Homer both speak repeatedly of the seventh sacred day, ἕβδομον ἱερὸν ἦμαρ. Callimachus also, in many verses, alluding to it—

ἑβδόμη ἐν πρώτοισι, καὶ ἑβδόμη ἐστὶ τελείη.

and the Elegies of Solon also ascribing divinity to the seventh day †. St. Augustin ‡, and Martianus Capella §, speak of the perfection of the seventh number, which is taken for universality in Scripture—"seven times falls the just man, seven times will I praise thee." Yet it is no less certain, that the substitution had been expressly and authoritatively made. Thus St. Justin Martyr, describing the assemblies of the Christians, says, "We

* Du Divorce, 164.
† Stromat. Lib. V. c. 14.
‡ De Civ. Dei, XI. 31.
§ Lib. VII.

have chosen the Sunday as being the first day of the creation of the world, and that of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord *." Accordingly, in ancient writers, the expression "Day of the Resurrection," is often used to signify the Sunday †; and in the Roman order, that of Pasch is applied to all Sundays in the year. Constantine made a law, ordaining that the Sunday should be celebrated throughout the Roman empire; and he extended it to the army, discharging soldiers from all military functions on that day. The Council of Laodicea renewed the order, prescribing its observance to all who had it in their power, which allowed exceptions in case of necessity. An hundred years later, the Emperor Leo, by an ordinance, forbade all judicial proceedings on that day, as also the amusements of the theatre, circus, and spectacles of wild beasts. All this was commanded to every subject on pain of incurring degradation and confiscation of property ‡. On Sundays and festivals, in order that the minds of the faithful should be occupied with the worship of God, it was expressly forbidden, both by the civil and ecclesiastical power, through all the cities of the empire, to admit the people to any theatrical exhibitions §.

This discipline continued to prevail during the middle ages. "On the Lord's day," say the decrees collected by Ives of Chartres, "nihil aliud agendum est, nisi Deo vacandum ||." All the faithful were then required to assist at high mass at the hour of tierce ¶. St. Germain, Bishop of Paris, is related to have cured the infirmity of a man named Gildomer, at Essone, which had been visited upon him for having worked upon a Sunday **. In the time of St. Gregory of Tours, a servant in the diocese of Tours was thought to have been judicially punished by Divine Providence for having worked at forming a hedge on a Sunday ††; and a rustic named

* Apolog. 2. † Mabillon in Vita S. Ruperti.

‡ Hist. des Fêtes de l'Eglise.

§ Cod. Theodos. L. XV. tit. 5. Just. III. 12. 7. Concil. Carthag. 401, c. 5.

|| Decret. Pars IV. c. 13.

¶ Id. Pars II. de Missâ.

** Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. XI. 143.

†† Miracula de B. Martini, cap. 29.

Leodulphus, was also regarded as visited from heaven for having yoked his oxen on a Sunday during the time of harvest*. It is related also of St. Patrick, that he prevented certain heathens, in the north of Ireland, from working at a wall on a Sunday. In Bavaria, at the end of the seventh century, when Paganism still struggled against the influence of the Church, we find Duke Theodo, on being converted by the blessed Bishop Rupert, to whom he gave permission to choose any place for his Episcopal See, giving to the Church the tenth part of the salt, and the tenths of the tax levied upon the salt that was collected in the mines on the Lord's day †. Petrarch mentions having beheld at Naples, with astonishment and indignation, a detestable abuse, which had long resisted both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. Rich men and nobles, as well as the plebeian inhabitants of that city, used to assemble on a certain plain called the Campo Carbonario, where sanguinary gladiatorial games were held on Sundays and festivals. All persons having been prohibited from attending under pain of excommunication, and the king, Charles III. having given the ground, the spot was solemnly blessed in his presence by Bartholomew, Vicar of the Neapolitan Church, and a temple erected, to which was added a new hospital for the poor ‡. "The Greeks and Romans," says a capitulary of St. Theodore of Canterbury, "do not on Sundays sail, or ride, or make bread, or mount in a chariot, unless to go to church. The Greeks," it adds, "do not write publicly, but for necessity they write privately at home §." It appears from Bede, that it was not allowed to use a carriage on Sundays; for Cuthbert, on entering the presence of Queen Ermantrude, said secretly to her (for it was Saturday), "Early on the second feria, mount your chariot (quia die Dominico curru ire non licet), and hasten to the royal city ||." At Thoulouse, Rodès, and many other places, the gates of cities were closed on Sundays and festivals, to prevent the chariots of travellers

* Miracula de B. Martini, cap. 44.

† Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 19.

‡ Italia Sacra, Tom. VI. 138.

§ Theodori Cantuar. Archiep. Capit. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IX.

|| In Vita S. Cuthberti, cap. 27.

from passing * ; and the Fathers of the Council of Salzbourg, in the year 1456, seem to have desired a return to this discipline †, of which Mabillon finds traces in many synods of an earlier age ‡. Jean Molinet, recording an instance of the impiety of the people of Bruges, says that when the King of the Romans was confined in the Hostel of Ravestein, the workmen, losing all fear of God, continued to fortify the house during Sunday and the festival of St. Peter §. At Marienburg, the Teutonic knights were forbidden to profane Sundays and festivals by any work, or game for money; which latter, indeed, on no occasion, was permitted in the order ||. Constantine had prescribed that markets should be held on Sunday; but against this practice Charlemagne issued a special law ¶ ; and Matthew Paris relates, that in the year 1200, the Pope sent preachers to various parts of the world, to enforce a stricter observance of the Sunday. —Amongst others, Eustace, Abbot of Flay, came into England, wrought divine miracles, and went from place to place, persuading the people to piety; and he so effectually prohibited markets on the Lord's day, that in all parts of England they were transferred to the Monday. In an ancient document in the archives of the Church of Ferrara, of the date of the seventh century, it is required that all work should be suspended on Sundays, from Saturday evening till Monday morning **.

On the other hand, the Church was so far from authorizing or approving of the Pharisaical strictness which induced the rabbinical writers to forbid any one to save another from fire on the Sabbath, or to kill an insect, that we find her, by the canons of the Council of Orleans, in the year 538, making it a subject of complaint, that some had persuaded the people that on Sundays it was not lawful to travel with horses or oxen in carriages, or to dress meat, or clean the house, or one's person. This council declares, that these observances are more Judaic than Christian, and confirms all the ancient prescriptions giving liberty, but it excepts the cultivation of the soil,

* Monteil, Hist. des Français, Tom. V. 231.
† Germania Sacra, II. ‡ Concil. III. Aurelian. can. 28.
§ Chronic. III. 230.
|| Voigt. Geschichte Marienburg, s. 198. ¶ Capit. CXL.
** Italia Sacra, I. 525.

which would prevent men from assisting in the church: and decrees, in nearly the same words, were enacted by the Council of Vienne in the year 755. It is a curious verification of a common maxim, when we find the French Parliament suppressing, as irreverent to the Divinity, a medal which had been struck by the city of Dijon, to commemorate the charity of Jacques de Frasans, its mayor, during the plague of 1639, on which was inscribed "Etiam in Septimo non licuit quiescere." The Church applauded what this assembly of Gallican magistrates condemned.

In common with Sundays, all the greater festivals were holidays of obligation, or days consecrated to God, in which, as the Council of Sens says, the faithful must abstain from all servile work: "nec vanitatibus aut voluptatibus occupentur;" but must apply themselves to the divine offices in the churches, and the people must be often thus admonished *. "True men, and fearing God, were to be stationed in the streets of cities and villages, and on the public ways, to exhort the negligent to repair to the church †." All servile work and judicial proceedings were to cease on the festivals, by decrees of the Emperors, Valentinian, Theodosius, and Arcadius ‡. On the Rogation days, we read in the Roman order, "that no one then must presume to ride on horseback, but that all must walk barefooted." The whole legislation, both civil and ecclesiastical, during the ages of faith, was directed to securing rest for the people on these great days of devotion, to enable them to conform to the spirit, and accomplish the object of the Church, in these institutions. If the holy councils declare that all days between Christmas and the Epiphany are festivals §, the constitutions of emperors ordained that, in honour of the great solemnity, from the 20th of December till the 6th of January, all pleadings were to cease before the tribunals. It even appears that, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, servile work and traffic were suspended during the whole of this interval ‖; and by the canons of the Council of Erfurt,

* Concil Senonens. act iv. cap. 1, 1460.
† Ivonis Carnot. Decret. Pars VI. 310.
‡ In L. Omnes, L. VII. de Feriis, Lib. III. c. tit. 12.
§ Concil. Turen. XII. c. 16. ‖ Hist. des Fêtes de l'Eglise.

in 932, it is forbidden to summon any one to plead in courts of justice seven days before Christmas, fifteen days before the Paschal time, and seven days before St. John; in order that every one may have means of going to the church, and of praying there. The same prohibition is extended to all who would constrain any Christian going to or returning from church, and require him to plead in the courts. If judicial acts were exercised upon a festival of obligation, they were void by the canon law *.

In very laborious trades, the ancient law of France required the workmen to rest during twelve days after Christmas, twelve days after Easter, and twelve days after Whitsuntide †. The time for opening the parliament of Paris used to be after St. Martin and after Easter; and Duchesne gives this reason, that the first kings of France used to devote the spring of the year to fasting, hearing sermons, visiting prisoners, and other works proper for Lent: thus providing for the health of their souls: whereas the autumn was the season fit for hunting, and other exercises which ministered to the health of the body ‡. The old parliaments of Normandy used to break up on the Friday before Palm Sunday, and not meet again till the Monday after Quasimodo. In like manner, from the Friday before Pentecost till the Monday after Trinity, and from two days before Christmas till the day after the Epiphany, there was a cessation of all business §.

It was especially enjoined by councils, that men and women servants, as well as all who were engaged in any labour, should have remission of their tasks, in order that the whole people might have equal opportunity of serving God ||. That the faith and devotion of the laity corresponded with the ecclesiastical and civil legislation in this respect, we have still, in England, an interesting proof in the custom of giving Christmas gifts; which presents to dependents were formerly repeated at all the great festivals, for they originated in the charity of masters, who desired that their servants and labourers might

* Joan. Devoti Institut. Canonic. II. V. 1.
† Monteil, Hist. des Français, III.
‡ Antiquitéz des Villes de France, I. 227.
§ Coutumes du Pays et Duché de Normandie.
|| Concil. Aurelian. I. c. 27.

indulge their devotions, and fulfil their obligations, by devoting these seasons to the care of their souls, frequenting the sacraments, and assisting at the offices in the church, and at the same time involve their families in no injury by causing an interruption to their wages.

In the year 1245, was buried in Seelbieres, a monastery of Cisteaux, a pious seignior, de Romilly, who dwelt at Romilly-sur-Seine, of whom it is related in the charters of that abbey, that, during a time of great famine, assisting on Easter day at the divine office of this great solemnity, and seeing that the greatest part of the inhabitants were neither present at mass nor vespers, he inquired the reason of such conduct; when he was told that, urged by the extreme necessity of the famine, they had been constrained to go into the neighbouring places to beg alms. He was greatly affected at this, on two accounts: first, that this day should be profaned; and, secondly, that the poor should suffer such distress. Therefore, that they might never again be obliged to leave the church on Easter day to beg bread, he gave the tenths of Romilly, which were in his possession, to the Abbey of Seelbieres, on condition that every Easter Sunday the monks should distribute bread to each of the inhabitants of Romilly, so that no one should receive less than four or five pounds of the best white bread, but the poorest were to have seven or eight pounds; which distribution continued to be made till the general overthrow of the ancient institutions in France. In like manner, in the Church of St. Magdalen, at Troyes, every Sunday in the year, the poor, who were called by rote one after the other, used to receive a similar allowance after high mass, in pursuance of the foundation of Nicolas Faï and Isabella his wife, in 1534 *.

With regard to the ecclesiastical observance, let us pause here to remark the wisdom and admirable fitness of the institution of octaves, or the setting apart eight days during which the mystery of the festival continued to be commemorated. "We shall rejoice during seven days," says Hugo de St. Victor, "and on the eighth we shall terminate the solemnity †."

Mary Magdalen remained at the sepulchre even after

* Desguerrois, Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 354.

† Instit. Monast. Serm. XXXI.

the disciples had departed; still she stood there weeping. Then we read she stooped, and looked into the sepulchre. "Certainly," says St. Gregory, "she had before seen that it was empty; she had before announced that the body of the Lord had been taken away. What is this, then, that she should again stoop down and look in? 'Sed amanti semel aspexisse non sufficit *.'"

So was it with the faithful people on the yearly commemorations of the Church during the middle ages. For them it was not enough to have looked but once: they remained at the sepulchre. Again, our Lord, after his passion, continued with his disciples during forty days, speaking concerning the kingdom of God. Accordingly, it was most natural that, in subsequent ages, when his resurrection was commemorated, men should desire to delay for some time in the contemplation of such a solemnity: they continued, therefore, in assembly, apart from the world, consoling and confirming each other in the supernatural life of faith, joining in melodious songs, bidding the Queen of Heaven rejoice, and inviting the sons and daughters of men to contemplate every minute circumstance which attended the triumph of the celestial King, the King of Glory. During these six most holy days which followed the Paschal solemnities, let no man, says one council, dare to perform any servile work, but let all together united, indulging in hymns, demonstrate the ardour of their perseverance in daily sacrifices †. Let the whole week, from the day of the resurrection till the next Sunday, says another council, be spent in the churches in psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, offered up in gratitude to Christ, and in attention to the holy Scriptures and to the celebration of the divine mysteries; and let no one, during those days, seek any other spectacle ‡. "We prescribe," say the Fathers of the Council of Mayence, in the year 813, "that, during the Paschal week, all works should cease, although, after the fifth feria, it shall be lawful to plough or sow, or dress vines §." During the entire octave, the Paschal offices were celebrated with the same splendour as on the day of the resurrection. "Paschalis dies," says Amalarius, bishop of Metz, who flourished in the beginning of

* Hom. XXV. in Evang.
† Concil. Matisc. II. c. 2.
‡ Concil. Trullan. c. 66.
§ C. 36.

the ninth century, "qui per septem dies quasi unus dies celebratur *."

In places of decline and desolation, when a mutilation of these solemnities had become indispensable, there are affecting proofs of the regret with which they were abandoned. Rising out of the ruins of Paestum and of Capaccio, which latter city had been built from the ruins of the former, and destroyed by Frederic II. in the year 1244, when the Count of Capaccio sided with Innocent IV., stands an ancient and noble Basilica, whose walls are formed with the antique marbles of Paestum. The sacred vessels and vestments of this church are preserved in the Church of St. Peter of Capaccio, the bishop and canons having been dispensed from residence on the destruction of the city, the see being virtually transferred to Diani, and the canons dispersed through various towns of the diocese, by command of Sixtus V., who assigns for reason that the city and all the buildings, both public and private, had fallen to decay; that the atmosphere was pernicious; that the roads leading to it were infested by robbers and other wicked men, who concealed themselves in the neighbouring woods in order to attack strangers; and that the whole place had become depopulated and uninhabitable. There remained in the cathedral only one priest and a sacristan. Nevertheless the bishop and canons were bound to repair thither on Easter Monday, in order to celebrate with solemnity there, as also in the ancient cathedral of Paestum, mass and vespers †. In the last century, also, we find Francis Xavier Fontana, bishop of Campagna, instituting in his cathedral a solemn celebration of the divine mysteries and offices on the same second festival of the resurrection.

This protraction of festivals seems to the moderns to have been only a reckless waste of time, and an unreasonable suspension of the ordinary course of domestic and social occupations; but to the men of the middle ages, who cultivated logical heads and affectionate hearts, a festival of twelve hours to commemorate any of the great mysteries of the Christian faith would have been deemed either too much or too little. Preserving with admirable tact consistency in every thing relative to the intellectual order, they would not have asked permission to comme-

* Lib. de Ord. Antiphonarii. † Italia Sacra, VII. 465.

morate the foundation of their faith, unless they could have celebrated it in a manner suitable to the affections and necessities of human nature. Philosophers, who set no value upon Christian traditions and the primitive ceremonies of faith, may disapprove of all commemorative festivals; but, if they feel the advantage or necessity of retaining those of the Catholic Church, they cannot with justice censure those who would have retained the spirit as well as the form of these institutions. It cannot be injudicious, or even useless, to ponder upon a theme so noble, so inspiring, as the proofs of the mysteries of our faith. That cannot be an abuse which serves as a permission or an invitation to devote a considerable interval of time to such an exercise. Certainly it is not superstition to love such indulgence, or to linger with a Virgilian earnestness around the scenes and symbols which exalt the soul with the hopes of an immortal existence:—

"Nec vidisse semel satis est; juvat usque morari."

In fact, as the Church unquestionably intended these anniversaries to excite emotions corresponding, if not equal, to those which would have been caused by witnessing the real event, there was no other course to adopt, but to order the protraction of the solemnity during a certain number of successive days; for the men whom the Church had to conduct in the middle ages, whether you consider them of an heroic or of a selfish type, were at all events, in an intense degree, idealists: they valued a conviction infinitely more than any other possession that the glory or industry of the world could procure them; consequently, they were not to be invited one day to commemorate the resurrection of their Lord—the pledge of their own resurrection, and to be told on the next that they might resume their usual occupations, as if no such appeal had been made either to their generous fidelity or to their interested egotism.

The moderns, who regard Christianity as a mere opinion of philosophy, may argue against the observance of any commemoration or external development of faith; but they cannot with justice condemn the pastors of the Church, who knew it to consist in a series of facts, for having been consistent in permitting their own principles to produce their natural results; nor can any Christians

call upon them for a mutilation or curtailment of these great anniversaries, without betraying something worse than a profound ignorance of human nature, as well as a very erroneous conception of the original idea which presided over the arrangement of the ecclesiastical year.

These observations, however, could only apply to the greater festivals; for with respect to others, there was no octave attached to the festival of any martyr but St. Lawrence, nor to that of any confessor excepting to that of St. Martin *.

It was not merely assistance at the divine mysteries that sufficed upon the great festivals. It was necessary to repair to the public assemblies of the faithful in churches. In the time of St. Augustin, priests were prohibited from admitting any one to private masses on festivals; and this prohibition was repeated in the year 781 by Theodulphus, bishop of Orleans. By a council held in the same city in 511, it was ordered that no one should celebrate Easter in the country; and the Council of Paris, in 824, enjoins upon kings and nobles that they should not, on days of festival, assist at the office in the chapels of palaces. Indeed it was always forbidden to celebrate mass in domestic chapels on any of the great festivals, unless in time of war, when it would be dangerous to leave the walls †. They who were present at the sacred mysteries on festivals, were always fasting from food and drink. An ancient author, in the time of St. Walaric, says, "There were two brethren, who came to him on the festival of the blessed Martin, to whom he said in reproach, 'I wonder that you should have presumed to drink before the solemnity of mass.' They, confessing their fault, demanded pardon, and promised to amend for the future:" and a council even forbids priests and deacons, and subdeacons, after food and drink, "in ecclesia dum missæ dicuntur stare ‡."

Here I would invite the reader to consider for a moment how a thousand popular customs connected with the festivals of religion conduced to give a tone of sanctity and to impart a kind of poetic charm to domestic life. The doctrines of faith, during the middle ages, are

* Durand. Rationale, Lib. VII. 37.

† Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, XIII. 169.

‡ Concil. Antissiod. can. 19. § 5.

all presented under the light of facts, than which no human events were more real. Thus, during the time of All Souls, it was the custom, as in Italy at present, for every one to appear in mourning. When that ghostly era arrives, a devout multitude leaves every city, and repairs to the holy field of the dead, bearing lighted torches, to assist at the benediction there given solemnly. The poor, the lame, and the blind, meekly and in silence, line the ways, and alms are largely given to them. After the office, each family visits its ancestral tomb, and prays for the souls of its members departed. Ah me! what tears then stream forth at the awakened memory of the pious son, the affectionate sister, the faithful brother, the revered parent, and of the angelic spouse! All that night the bells of the churches and monasteries send forth a solemn peal. In some places, as at Bayeux, in consequence of the affluence of the people, there was the fair of the dead*. During the whole of Lent, spectacles of amusement ceased, and all splendid attire was laid aside, to be resumed only at the Paschal festival.

Signs of joyful affection were mutually given on the great anniversaries. On Easter day, the holy father at Rome, before celebrating mass, kisses the cardinals, prelates, and others of his household, saying, as he salutes them, "Surrexit Dominus vere;" to which they reply, "Et apparuit Simoni," and this custom became general among the faithful†. Pope Pius V. indeed found it necessary to signify among abuses a custom of jocularity at Easter in the very church, which gave rise to the expression, "Risus, or fabula Paschalis."

The term Pasch indeed came to signify every joyful feast; so that, even in the Roman order, we read of the Pasch of the Epiphany, the Pasch of Pentecost.

At Paris it was the custom for the silversmiths to provide the most costly service of plate for the banquet given to the sick poor in the Hostel Dieu on Easter day‡. In holy week, princes ordained that prisons should be opened, and pardon granted to criminals, and insolvent debtors discharged. St. Chrysostom says, that the Emperor Theodosius sent letters of remission to the

* Pluquet Essais Hist. sur Bayeux, ch. 28.

† Durandus Rationale, Lib. VI. c. 86.

‡ Du Chesne, Antiquitéz des Villes de France, I. 82.

cities for the days preceding Easter *, a custom which was observed by his successors, who, as St. Leo the Great says, made the altitude of their power stoop in honour of the passion and resurrection of Christ, and tempered the severity of their laws during the days on which the world was redeemed, in order to imitate the divine mercy †. In France, in the seventh century, this custom was also in force. Subsequently, the same indulgence was granted on the days preceding Christmas and Whitsuntide. "Le Roy de l'Aumône" was a popular festivity instituted in the ninth century, in commemoration of the liberalities of Boson, king of Burgundy. Every year, after high mass on Easter Monday, the magistrates used to declare the name of the citizen that best deserved to be proclaimed "King of Alms." The king elect (and what earthly king ought not to have envied him?) was then crowned, and conducted to the prison, where he had the privilege of delivering two prisoners. Then he made a solemn distribution of the royal alms; after which, a public dinner closed the festivities.

Who can describe the grandeur of that triumphant march on Palm Sunday, when the aisles of churches, and even the streets of cities, seem a moving wood?

In Spain it is a custom in schools for the scholars to gather the palms, and form them into a variety of beautiful shapes, representing churches and castles, on each of which is a cross and an image of our Saviour. The boy who has gained the prize at examination, is then appointed to precede the rest, and the students in a body form a part of the public solemn procession. On the same day, the clergy of Nôtre Dame, in Paris, used to make a station before the prison of the Petit Chatelet, while the ecclesiastic who was first in dignity entered the prison and delivered a prisoner, who then followed them into the choir of the metropolitan church ‡.

We find Honorius II. granting, in the year 1217, to Fulco, bishop of Paris, and to his successors, the right of proceeding in the procession on Palm Sunday and on Easter Monday, mounted on a white horse §.

At Florence, the family of the Pazzi had the privilege

* Homil. in Magn. Hebdom. † Ser. 39.
‡ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. I. IV.
§ Italia Sacra, I. 1098.

of appointing one of its members to kindle the new fire on Holy Saturday in the church, in commemoration of the heroic piety of a knight of that family who followed Godfrey of Bouillon to Jerusalem, from which he brought back sacred fire *.

The answer recorded of the blessed Benedict may have been the origin of using the word "Pasch," to signify any happy event †, as in France the word "noël," or "requies dei," which denoted Christmas, was become, as every one knows, the common cry of popular rejoicing. At Rheims, the children of the choir used to be dressed to represent angels appearing to the shepherds. Birds were let to fly loose in the church, to represent the liberty which men were to enjoy when delivered from the slavery of the demon by the birth of our Saviour ‡.

The nativity of our Lord was associated with a multitude of incidents which rendered it peculiarly dear to the imagination of the people:—

> "And well our Christian sires of old,
> Loved, when the year its course had roll'd,
> And brought blithe Christmas back again,
> With all his hospitable train:
> Domestic and religious rite
> Gave honour to the holy night.
> On Christmas nights the bells were rung;
> On Christmas night the mass was sung;
> That only night in all the year
> Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
> Then open'd wide the baron's hall
> To vassal, tenant, serf and all:
> All hail'd with uncontroll'd delight,
> And general voice, the happy night,
> That to the cottage or the crown
> Brought tidings of salvation down."

Stephen Pasquier mentions that it was the custom in his youth, every evening all through Advent, to sing carols in honour of our Saviour §. During that season, in England, the waits, while all other men took their rest, wandered singing hymns in the streets; and on the blessed night, every one kept watch like the shep-

* Italia Sacra, III. 37. † Mabilonii, vêt. Analet. 407.
‡ Anquetil, Hist. de Reims, Lib. IV. 105.
§ Recherche de la France, Lib. III. 16.

herds, while minstrels chanted Christmas carols, the simplicity and tenderness of which were sometimes admirable, as in the verse,—

> " He neither shall be born
> In housen nor in hall,
> Nor in the place of Paradise,
> But in an ox's stall;
> He neither shall be rock'd
> In silver nor in gold,
> But in a wooden cradle,
> That rocks on the mould."

In these ancient carols the people of each town or village used to be represented making the offering of whatever best object they possessed to the infant Saviour and the blessed Mary. Thus, in the " Noël," published by Lebeuf, beginning with " Les Bourgeoises de Chartres," the author represents the inhabitants of Chartres, Montlhéry, and other villages, coming to the stable of Bethlehem and making their offerings:—

> " Vous eussiez vu venir tous ceux de saint Yon,
> Et ceux de Bretigny apportant du poisson:
> Les barbeaux et gardons, anguilles et carpettes,
> Etoient à bon marché, et aussi les perchettes *."

The History of the Magi and of the Shepherds had charmed the winter evenings of every family. The Pilgrim and the Red Cross Knight had given their moving commentary, and described what traces they had beheld in Palestine of that pious journey. Then, when these romantic recitals had enchanted many a young head, the night would bring with it blessed dreams of bright angels balancing above the cradle, with their blue wings and golden hair, and robe white as the snow. The long desired hour at last arrived, and the church opened her indulgences for those who assisted at the mass of midnight. What an impressive thing it was then to behold cities awakened and rising up, like one man, to hasten thither! What an impressive thing to behold, assembled in the church, the wild throng of those eternal wanderers, half astronomers, half sorcerers, (for the terror they in-

* Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. XI. 289.

spired was not confined to Brie*) the shepherds of the plains of Languedoc, of the Cevennes, of the Pyrenees, those who in Estramadura, Navarre, and Arragon, with no other companions but the stars in their solitude, perpetuate the Asiatic life, the life of Lot and Abraham, those whom we find in Italy also, clad in the skins of beasts, carrying nothing with them but their rustic instruments of music, on the Apennines, the plains of Apulia, and over the Campagna of Rome, walking in all the liberty of the antique world! These now were objects of edification in the churches, and of wonder as they strayed along the streets of Rome, Madrid, Toulouse, and Barcelona. Every where, over the obscure plains, along the ocean shores, amidst forests and mountains, glared the torch of the nocturnal pilgrim, who made his way murmuring the names of Jesus and Mary. On that blessed night, all the churches in Christendom, from the Basilica of St. Mary Major, to the Chapel of the Poor Hermit in the Wilderness, united their voices to repeat the joyful "Alleluja Christus natus est nobis," and the song that so moves the soul—"Venite adoremus." A thousand local and incidental charms were often added, according to the tender piety of the people. St. Francis, on one occasion, being near the town of Grecio, celebrated the festival of the Nativity within an ancient portico, in a stable, in which were an ox and an ass, and figures representing our Lord and his blessed mother and Joseph. The friars were more numerous than the inhabitants of the place; but the peasants of the neighbourhood came thither with pipes and rustic instruments, on which they played before the stable, so that all night long the surrounding mountains resounded with their harmony. It was on this night that St. Francis, after the gospel, preaching to the people, was unable through tenderness to pronounce the adorable name, and spoke of the Infant of Bethlehem. An effect of this night was the conversion of John de Grecio, who renounced chivalry and the pomps of the world, to take up his cross with Francis†. It is worthy of remark that even the infidels in Pagan lands, and the wild race of outcasts who wander over Europe, are moved by a certain vague traditionary or

* Le P. le Brun, Hist. de Superstition, Tom. I. 308.

† Les Chroniques des Frères Menian, Lib. I. c. 95.

instinctive reverence for that night. It is said that multitudes of the tribe entitled Bohemians, or gipsies, assemble every year, on Christmas eve, on Salisbury Plain. St. Augustin had remarked this phenomenon, and had observed that "the celebrity of the Paschal vigil throughout the whole world compelled those to watch in flesh, who in heart, I do not say," he cries, "sleep, but are buried in Tartarean impiety. Therefore," he continues, "we are admonished even by our enemies, unintentionally, how we should watch for ourselves, when, on account of us, they who envy us watch. For of those who have never been consigned under the name of Christ, there are many who, on that night, cannot sleep—some through grief, others through shame; others again who begin to approach towards faith, and who are prevented from sleeping by the fear of God *." But while this continues true, intolerance or cowardice, in modern times, have availed themselves of the scoffs of heresy to deprive a Christian people of a happiness which the Turks do not refuse to the Catholics of Constantinople.

The moderns seem to regard Christmas night as the most perilous of all those in the year, and the most distempered. In the middle ages it was thought that the nights were at that season wholesome, and that nothing had power to harm, so holy and so blessed was the time. Then were associated in the imagination of youth the sacred solemnities of the Church, her bright altars, and her saintly crowd of faithful adorers, with rides through forests resounding to the roar of famished wolves, and the crossing of midnight torrents. It was the contrast of communion and desolation—of heaven and earth. Thus we read in the Spiritual Voyage of Dom John de Palafox, bishop of Osma, which is the fruit of a curate's meditation on the night of Christmas, previous to singing matins: —"Then we walked over mountains covered with snow, and through fearful rocks; and the darkness of the night often prevented me from seeing my guide. And I said, 'Alas! my good angel, what roads are these? The night which was so delightful to me in the stable where our Lord reposed, is now become very terrible,'"—a symbolic expression of a general truth; for when one turns from the church and the altar to the naked world

* § 219, in Vigil. Pasch.

over which the blight of incredulity has passed, one feels like Adam when about to leave Paradise,—

> ——————— " All places else
> Inhospitable appear, and desolate,
> Not knowing us, nor known."

Well, indeed, might the church appear a delightful place on that blessed night, when the altar, illuminated with a sudden splendour, proclaimed in symbol the happy day which had risen upon the world. Nothing was even wanting that could add majesty to the solemn scene in the estimation of men of secular minds. Emperors and kings claimed as their privilege the honour of reading the Seventh Lesson, which records the decree of Cæsar Augustus.

Nor did poetry and art, and the domestic muse, derive less advantage from the other festivals of the year. That of Corpus Christi was an occasion of adorning the exterior walls of houses with beautiful paintings and imagery. The streets of populous cities were made fragrant with odoriferous shrubs, while the eye was refreshed with leaves and garlands, and mingled rain of herbs and flowers; and every domestic heirloom of rare and costly device was brought forth to hail the passage of the King of Heaven. The margins of rivers, the sloping lawns, and the plains of waving corn that undulate like a mighty sea under the western breeze, now wondered at the unaccustomed brightness of the cross and banners, and at the melodious chants of men who, instead of wandering over the earth like a race cursed of heaven to pursue its innocent creatures, now, like angels mild, walked in peace with nature.

Thus every where in this nether world, as formerly in Paradise, the descendants of Adam could frequent with worship, place by place, where God vouchsafed presence divine, and among their earthly dwellings seek his bright appearances.

With respect to the popular festivals associated with those of the Church, and perpetuated by the general attachment of the people, if on the page of history they should seem absurd and indecorous, men should consider how many things they are themselves in habits of witnessing without surprise or offence, which, if coldly

described in future ages, will most certainly appear in a supreme degree ridiculous.

In the middle ages, as Michelet beautifully observes, the Church and people were the same thing as mother and child. Both were void of distrust: the mother wished to suffice to her child. She accepted him without reserve. The Church did not grow angry at the popular dramas attached to some of her high festivals. She allowed even the beast as well as the man to be re-established. The humble witness of our Saviour's birth, the faithful animal whose breath warmed him an infant in the manger, who bore him with his mother into Egypt, who led him triumphant into Jerusalem, had also part in the joy. Why should one blush for him? The Saviour was not ashamed of him. In later days, indeed, the Church was obliged to impose silence on the people; but in the first centuries of the middle ages, what harm was there in all that? Who does not love that trait in the character of the blessed Francis, when he so ingeniously seeks some reason in the history of the sacred event commemorated, for imparting to all the creatures a share in the joy of the Christian festivals? "Omnis creaturæ aliquid habet homo," was the remark of Gregory the Great; and, independent of that consideration, to judge by the love and tenderness, and even the kind of respect, evinced for all animals during the middle ages, one might suppose that men had concluded, from the words of the apostle, that the benefits of the Christian mysteries were not confined to the creatures who participated in the intelligence of angels.

The puerile solemnities on the festival of St. Nicholas, of the boy bishop, though prohibited so early as in the year 1274, by the synod and bishop of Salzbourg *, were, after all, an innocent, and even perhaps frequently an edifying usage. On the eve of the Holy Innocents, the child bishop and his youthful clergy, in little copes, and with burning tapers in their hands, went in procession, chanting versicles, made some prayers before the altar, and sung complin. By the statute of Sarum, no one was to interrupt or press upon the children during their procession or service in the cathedral, upon pain of anathema. This ceremony existed, not only in collegiate churches,

* Germ. Sacra, II. 378.

but in almost every parish. It is supposed that the anniversary montem at Eton, which used to be celebrated in winter, is only a corruption of this ceremony, which, for once at least, deserves a dignity in history, from having been suppressed by the edict of Henry VIII.

At the procession of Michaelmas, in honour of St. Michael, made by a confraternity at Paris, there used to be a representation of angels and demons, and Montiel remarks that a salutary effect was produced upon the surrounding multitude, by the spectacle of the great balance, which St. Michael slowly agitated with a solemn noise. The festival of St. Martin was an occasion of rejoicing to the poorest and most obscure class of society; for on that day was chosen Le Roi des Guétifs, or king of the mendicants, who was allowed a revenue from the authorities of each town, raised on the markets, in order to hold his court and public diversion, which was repeated on the first day of the year *.

On the eve of every festival, the inhabitants of each parish would vie with each other in bringing the most beautiful flowers and the richest vases to adorn the altar of their church; so that even in the beauteous garniture of the sanctuary one beheld an emblem of unity and faith. Fires flamed on all the hills on the eve of St. John, to commemorate, as Durandus says, "the precursor, who was a burning and a shining light †." For still was fulfilling the prediction of the angel, "Et multi in nativitate ejus gaudebunt ‡." Cities had recourse to the same emblem on this occasion. The fire in the Place de Grève, at Paris, used to be lighted solemnly by the governor of Paris; and sometimes even the king, accompanied by the princes and all the principal magistrates of the city, would take torches, and light it with their own hands §. To the poet, however, the solemn woods and the bald top of desolate mountains would seem a more appropriate scene for this wild but touching manifestation of a general feeling, which recalls the simple enjoyments of the primæval world:—

* Marchangy, Tristan, V. 40.
† Rationale, Lib. VII. c. 19.
‡ Luc. I. 14.
§ Duchesne, Antiquitéz des Villes de France, Tom. I. 62.

" Interea, quod sylva glabra est, quod cespite vertex
Decalvato horret; damna, sed apta, puto.
Nocturnos nam hic ipse locus magè quadrat ad ignes.
Nempe, suis semper sunt bona juncta malis!
Huc, cantus studiosa cohors, pueri atque puelæ,
Scandite! pacificos et glomerate choros:
At prius, ædificate pyram. Trahe pinea tecum,
Tu Virgo! trahe tu robora querna puer!
Arida mox, spatiis interlucentibus, igni
Nutrimenta date. Stridat in alta rogus*!"

At Florence, on St. John's eve, the exterior of the vast cathedral, and of the baptistery adjoining, are illuminated at the expense of a confraternity of pious laymen; and the poor mariners on the Adriatic behold the illuminated dome of Loretto glittering on the mountains during the night of our blessed Lady's festival.

Lo, what a contrast between the two societies, however minute may be the detail in which we investigate them! The moderns illuminate their cities for victories in the senate or the field; Catholics on the festivals of the martyrs. The one for an earthly and sanguinary, the other for a heavenly joy; the one for some party triumph, the other for a universal benefit: for in the strict sense of the term, Catholic is even the very rejoicing of a Catholic population. Nevertheless it is too true that some of these ancient popular customs associated with the religious festivals were far from being in unison with the spirit and object of the Church in their institution. The Church prepares her children for the penitential exercises of Lent by gradual abstinence, in which she was followed by multitudes during the middle ages†. Nevertheless we find St. Chrysostom speaking of persons who provide against the approach of Lent with feasting, as a city makes provision on the advance of an enemy. The Church, in subsequent ages, had to deplore the excesses of the Carnival, and to recur to her most affecting solemnities, in order to win the frail and wavering combatants of the cross from succumbing to the infectious

* Joan. Biselii, Deliciæ Æstatis, Lib. I. Eleg. 24. Ignes Joannæi.

† Maximus Tourenensis Hom. in die Cinerum.

spectacle of vanity which the world then presented to them with more than ordinary attractions.

It appears that the Christians used to feast in their houses on the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the time of St. Ambrose *; and that it was a general practice on the festivals, may be learned from St. Jerome †. St. Bernard alludes to this custom without censure. "You know, brethren, that it is the custom of seculars to prepare a feast on days of festival; and the greater the solemnity, the more splendidly do they feast‡." He might have even appealed to the monastic discipline; for on Christmas-day, and the three feasts of Easter, the use of fowl was permitted to the Benedictine monks of Monte Casino §, as Paul the Deacon observes in his Epistle to King Charles, son of Pepin, which is inserted in the chronicles of that house: and it is expressly mentioned that the two silver gilt cups, which had been given to the monks of that house by Robert Guiscard, were used by them in the refectory on the principal festivals ||. But by degrees, the door of abuse being once open, grievous scandal was introduced from the anticipation of the festival, in such a manner as to interfere with the vigil, and also from the intemperance of the dissolute. The vigil of Christmas was most solemn, and the Church regarded its violation as a most serious offence; and equally repugnant to all her desires, was the dedication of the night of Christmas to excess and intemperance.—We remarked in a former book, that by the rules of fraternities of workmen, playing cards on the vigil of Christmas subjected offenders to be banished from the society.—During the middle ages, men were not left in doubt whether they might not confine their Christmas visits to the stalls of those that ply the slaughterer's trade, according to the practice of that flesh-devouring people, who, like the idolatrous race near Mount Libanus, might wear the image of an ox to represent their Deity, from its being, as they say, with beef that he sustains them.

Dom Gervaise, abbot of La Trappe, in his life of Suger, is greatly amazed that so wise an abbot should

* S. Ambrosi, Serm. LXVII. † Epist. XXIII.
‡ S. Bernardi in Festo Omnium. Sanctorum. Serm. I.
§ Capit. Aquisgrav. LXIX.
|| Chronic. Casinensis, Lib. III. c. 58.

have ordained a feast, and a full banquet for the monks, upon the day of his own future anniversary. Abeilard too had raised his voice against this mode of paying honour to days of particular devotion. St. Gregory Nazianzen, in speaking of the Epiphany, had exhorted the people to celebrate that great day, not with feasts for the body, but with a holy joy *. St. Jerome also says, that such a mode of honouring the festivals of the martyrs was ridiculous †; and St. Augustin inveighed against the same abuse, reminding the people that they ought rather to imitate the moderation and abstinence of the martyrs ‡.

"Alas! wretched and insane lovers of the world!" exclaims Thomas à Kempis, "who pervert the festivals of Christ, and the honours of the saints, to banquets of gluttony and merriment! Woe to you who desert Jesus, offend the angels, and gladden demons §." Walafried Strabo mentions the custom of consecrating a lamb at Easter, which had come down from the Jews, and which still prevails in Poland; and he objects to it as a superstition, thinking that the shadow ought to be abolished, and not blessed, when we have been vouchsafed the reality ‖: and at the time of the festival of the circumcision, it was usual with the Romans to make presents, and to indulge in various entertainments. The Christians held these in horror. "The Pagans," says St. Augustin, "give presents; you give alms to the poor. They listen to licentious songs; you go to hear the holy homilies of your pastors. They run to the theatre; you hasten to the church. They get drunk; do you fast or make a frugal meal." The faithful were forbidden to give etrennes, or new-year's gifts, in order to avoid the superstition of the Pagans. It was even made a day of fasting and penance, to contrast with the excesses of the calends of January; but as the Church was not able wholly to suppress the ancient habit, after abolishing the more gross abuses of the calends, she abrogated, in the eighth century, the fasts which had been prescribed for the beginning of the year, and only exhorted the faithful to make their presents to the poor instead of their private friends. The drawing lots on the Epiphany to elect a

* Lib. III.
† Epist. XIX.
‡ De Pœn. Medic.
§ Sermonum III. Pars 10.
‖ De Reb. Ecclesiast. cap. 28.

king, is a remnant of the Pagan superstition observed in the world, which ecclesiastical writers have censured, without being able to suppress it. St. Ambrose reproves the people for continuing to observe with Gentiles the kalends of January at the Epiphany. "One thing," says the holy bishop, "is the order of eternal life; another the desperation of temporal lasciviousness. How can you religiously observe the Epiphany of our Lord when you devoutly celebrate the kalends? for Janus was a man, the founder of a city, now called Janiculum, in whose honour the calends of January were instituted by the Gentiles: therefore he sins who pays divine honour to a dead man. Brethren, let us shun every festivity of the Gentiles, that when they feast we may fast; and in like manner, let us avoid all conversation with the Jews, which is a great pollution *."

Let us move onwards—lamenting only, and with upraised hands—wondering, in conclusion, at the insensibility and oblivion of so many persons in later times, who at such seasons, withdraw themselves from cities and solemn churches, to enjoy rustic sports and luxurious banquets at their feudal retreats, and study only where they well may dine: who thus, not only as Christians, in a spiritual and mystic sense, but as men, in relation to the highest privileges of genius, may be said, when heaven opens, to gloat with fond eyes still upon the earth; and literally, like the degenerate Esau, for a mess of pottage to exchange their birthright.

CHAPTER VIII.

So far we have considered, as it were externally, the festivals of the Catholic Church. Let us now penetrate more into their interior sense, and proceed to inquire with what mind the faithful assisted at their celebration,

* Serm. XVII.

during the ages of which we are attempting the moral history.

In the first place, they were evidently received, not as secular, but as religious festivals: they were seasons set apart for the cultivation of holy affections, of the pure, spiritual, interior life, and for the consequent exaltation of the true dignity of our nature. In the language and manners of our ancestors, we can see what it was to comply with the desire of the Church, to breathe after the nativity of Christ, to feed and drink of that celestial mystery *. It was not enough to suspend manual labour; but the affections, acts, and conversation, were all to correspond with the character of fervent, that is, sincere disciples. To spend festivals in games and diversions, was prohibited by the first Council of Toledo, and by that of Tarragona, as also by the constitution of St. Louis; which prohibitions were repeated in France under Henry II. in 1547. Moreover, men were advised to seek solitude on the festivals; for the secular conversation of persons following the discipline of the world, would render it almost impossible for the soul to retain the graces and recollections which had been inspired by the ceremonies of faith. It was far from his own, far from his mother, far from the three great apostles, his most intimate friends, that Jesus persevered during those three long hours, in that lengthened prayer, "Eundem sermonem dicens."

Petrarch makes a remark of this nature, in reply to a letter of Barbatus de Salmone, who lamented that he had not found him at Rome, when he went there to join the jubilee—"You speak of our not meeting at Rome," writes Petrarch, "as a misfortune: I hold it to have been providential. If we had met in that great city, we should have been more occupied with the arts and sciences than with our souls; and should have sought to ornament our understandings rather than to purify our hearts. The sciences are most agreeable food for the mind; but what a void do they leave in the heart, if they are not directed to their true and perfect end!"

It was the opinion of St. Francis de Sales, who was so remarkable for a constant cheerfulness, that on Sundays and festivals one ought not even to speak of temporal

* Post Com. for the Vigil of Christmas.

affairs *. On those days Tertullian requires men to avoid all habit and office of anxiety †. On occasion of a dispute between two monks at Cluni, St. Odo, the second abbot, is recorded to have spoken as follows. "Dominicus est, ideo nullus contristari debet, et ideo ista discussio suspendatur in crastinum ‡."

It was expected that the laity should meditate on the mystery of the season. "It is not sufficient that you hear divine lessons in the church," says St. Cæsarius of Arles, "but you must yourselves read them, or hear them read, in your houses §." Thus Stephen Pasquier, in a letter to the curate of his parish, says, "As Christmas approaches, I have been reading over the four Evangelists, with diligence and devotion ‖." St. Bernard requires the people to have erudition in their acquaintance with the festivals. "Perhaps," saith he, "the meaning of this word Advent, so celebrated throughout the world, may not be known to many; for the unhappy sons of Adam, omitting true and salutary studies, pursue rather those that are perishable and transitory ¶."

From St. Bonaventura's remarks on the ascension, we may form a correct idea of the influence which was produced on the minds of men by the festivals of the Church. "O what was it to behold the Lord thus gloriously ascending! O what would it be if any one could see and hear those most blessed spirits and holy souls ascending up with him! Perchance through joy the soul would be separated from the body, and would ascend also along with them! Never, from the beginning of the world, was there such a festival in the heavenly Jerusalem, nor will there ever be again one so solemn until the day of judgment, when all the elect will be presented there with their glorious bodies. Therefore does this solemnity surpass all others. Examine them all, and judge if it be not so. A great and solemn festival is indeed the incarnation of our Lord, and the beginning of all our good. But this regards ourselves, and not him. (Mark how the moral philosophy of the middle ages breaks out here.) A great feast is his nativity, but it only regards ourselves:

* Marsollier vie de Mde. de Chantal. I. 150.
† De Orat. c. 23. ‡ Bibliothec. Cluniacens. 40.
§ S. August. Append. CXL. 2. ‖ Lettres, Liv. XX. 7.
¶ De Adventu Dom. Serm. I.

for it is a subject of compassion as far as regards him, because he was born to poverty, and labours, and sufferings. A great festival is that of his passion, because then all our sins were wiped away; and, as blessed Gregory says, it would have served us nothing to have been born, if we had not been redeemed. But this was a subject of joy to us, and not to him who endured such bitter torments. Moreover, a great and solemn feast is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, as well for him as for us, because he appeared to triumph gloriously, and we were justified; and therefore the Church celebrated it with that singular exclamation of 'Hæc est dies quam fecit Dominus.' And yet this day of the ascension is still greater, because before it, though our Lord rose from the grave, yet did he remain on earth; still were the gates of Paradise closed, still the holy fathers had not gone to the Father: all which things were completed in the ascension—without which all the rest had been imperfect. Similarly, a great feast is the day of Pentecost; but still, the object of rejoicing then regards ourselves, and not our Lord. But the ascension is properly the most solemn festival of our Lord Jesus, because on that day he began to sit at the right hand of his Father, and to rest from his labours of redemption; and also it is properly the festival of all the heavenly spirits, because they conceived a new joy on beholding our Lord, who then, for the first time, appeared in heaven, under the form of humanity; and it is also no less properly our festival, because on that day was human nature exalted above the heavens, and because, unless Christ had ascended, the Holy Ghost would not have been given; and therefore St. Bernard says, in his Sermon de Ascensione Domini, that this most glorious solemnity is the consummation and fulfilment of all other solemnities, and the happy termination of the whole journey of our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God *."

The mind being thus instructed and sanctified, all external acts and occupation were to correspond with the festival. "During the intervals that used to be spent to the injury of your souls," says St. Augustin, "the sick are to be visited, prisoners are to be comforted, strangers received to hospitality, and discords appeased." "Let

* S. Bonavent. Meditat. Vitæ Christi. cap. 97.

no one," says St. Cæsarius of Arles, "on those days treat his domestics with severity. Let us be mild to our servants, courteous to strangers, merciful to the poor, pacific to all men. Let the whole day be devoted to prayer, or reading, or to hearing holy conversation *." "Let quarrels cease," say the Fathers, "let offences be forgiven, let severity give place to gentleness, indignation to pity, and discord to peace †."

In the second place, it is necessary to bear constantly in mind, that the festivals of the Church were, in a certain sense, dramatic—not only by the spirit of their institution, but also in the estimation of the people who assisted at them; for the only key with which we can penetrate into the secrets of their mystic connexion with the life of men, consists in the knowledge of this fact, that the Church supposes the mystery which she celebrates at any particular season, to be then actually taking place as if for the first time. Thus, as Lewis of Grenada remarks, "for seven days before the nativity she sings the antiphons, which express her ardent longing for the coming of the infant Messiah, whom she calls by various titles, exclaiming, 'O Sapientia quæ ex ore altissimi prodiisti! O adonay et dux domus Israel! O radix Jesse, qui stas in signum populorum! O clavis David, quæ aperis et nemo claudit! O oriens splendor lucis æternæ, et sol justitiæ! O rex gentium et desideratus earum ‡.'" She supposes that Christ is then about to be born; and to express the intensity of her desire, she repeats, in a strain of ravishing harmony, that short emphatic prayer, which sounds like the cry of humanity thirsting after justice, in this world of wretchedness and sin—"Rorate cæli desuper, et nubes pluant justum: aperiatur terra, et germinet salvatorem."

This fact being well understood, the clergy took care never to dissipate the impressions of the festival, by delivering before the people on that occasion any general moral instructions or philosophical speculations, however calculated to give pleasure at other times. We find that, during the middle ages, the sermons for festivals were always in accordance with the dramatic spirit of the

* S. 146.

† Rheinwald Die Kirchliche Archæologie, p. 137.

‡ Vide Ludovic. Grenad. in Commem. Annunc. Concio.

Church, and calculated to complete the rapture of those who were to be filled with mystical vows and joy. As an instance, witness the discourse of St. Bernard on the nativity. "A voice of joy hath sounded in our land; a voice of exaltation and of safety in the tents of sinners! A good word, a consoling word, has been heard; a word full of gladness, worthy of all acceptation! Sing praise, O ye mountains, and all ye trees of the wood. Hear, O heavens, and lend your ears, O earth; let all creatures stand amazed: and above all, O man, be thou astonished. Jesus Christus, filius Dei, nascitur in Bethleem Judæ. Who has such a stony heart as not to melt at hearing this? What could be announced more sweet and delectable! What word was ever heard like this, or when did the world ever receive any thing similar? Christus, filius Dei, nascitur in Bethleem Judæ! O short word, abbreviated from a word, but full of celestial sweetness! The affection of surpassing pleasure flows over, not finding words. Such is the grace of this sentence, that it would instantly lose somewhat of excellence if I were to change one iota. Jesus Christus, filius Dei, nascitur in Bethleem Judæ. O blessed nativity! holy, honourable to the world, amiable to men, unsearchable to angels, unfathomable in the depths of its sacred mystery, and wonderful to all, in the singular excellence of its unprecedented strangeness! for there was never any thing before like it, and there will never be a sequel. O thou only birth without sorrow, without shame, without corruption—not rending, but consecrating the temple of a virginal womb! O nativity above nature, surpassing and repairing nature, by virtue of the mystery! Brethren, who will declare this generation? An angel announces; virtue overshadows; the Spirit of the Most High descends; a virgin believes, conceives by faith, a virgin brings forth, and remains a virgin! The Son of the Most High God is born; born of God before all ages! Who can sufficiently admire! Jesus Christus filius Dei, nascitur in Bethleem Judæ! Ye that are in the grave, rise up and cry out praise. Behold the Lord comes with salvation: he comes with salvation, with unction, with glory. For neither can Jesus come without salvation, nor Christ without unction, nor the Son of God without glory: for he is salvation, and unction, and glory.—Happy the soul which is drawn by tasting the fruit of

salvation, and which runs in the odour of ointments, that it may behold his glory; the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. Ye lost people, breathe again; Jesus comes to seek and to save that which was lost. Ye sick, recover health; Christ comes to heal contrite hearts with the unction of his mercy. Whoever you may be that desire great things, rejoice; the Son of God descends to you, that he may make you heirs of his kingdom. Heal me then, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; glorify me, and I shall possess glory. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name; for he is propitious to all my sins, he heals all my infirmities, he fulfils all my desires! All this I know on hearing that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is born. Jesus, then, is born. Let him rejoice whose conscience adjudges him worthy of eternal condemnation; for the pity of Jesus surpasses all the multitude and heinousness of sin. Christ is born. Let him rejoice who is assailed by ancient vices; for before the face of the unction of Christ no disease of the soul, however inveterate, can stand. The Son of God is born. Let him exult who is accustomed to desire great things; because a great dispenser hath arrived. Brethren, this is the heir: let us devoutly receive him, and the inheritance shall be ours. For he who gives his own Son, how will he not with him give us all things? If man judge these things incredible, let his eyes confirm faith. Jesus Christus natus est in Bethleem Judæ. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after him; for this is justice in the heart by faith, which alone has glory before God. Let there be added confession unto salvation: and then securely receive him who is this day born in Bethlehem of Judah—Jesus Christ, the Son of God *."

Having seen what was the spirit of the Church and the solicitude of the clergy, there will be no difficulty in coming to the conclusion, that the devotion of the people corresponded with both. It is clear, from consulting the history of the middle ages, that the ceremonies of these anniversaries generally acted upon the minds of men with the force of reality. During the great week, every city was Jerusalem,—and Jerusalem about to witness the crucifixion of the Messiah. A general agitation and fervour

* S. Bernardi in Vigilia Natalis Domini, Serm. I.

announced the entrance of our Lord on the first day. The whole population might be seen carrying branches of palm. So positive an event was this commemoration to the seraphic mind of St. Claire, that after walking in that train, agreeably to the advice of St. Francis, clad in her most sumptuous robes, she left the city secretly on the following night, to exchange, not in imagination but in reality, the pleasures of the world for the tears of the passion, and the way of the children of vanity for that of the Son of God. Who could describe the popular impressions evinced upon that awful day which followed soon after, of which the bare name is so full of mystery, which saw the devout kiss imprinted by such multitudes upon the mystic sign of mourners—or that universal joy, which hailed the festival of the human race, commemorative of its great deliverance from the sting of direful death!

To consent to the beauty and wisdom of the festivals of the Catholic Church, considered in this point of view, implies undoubtedly the admission of many points which are either overlooked or contested by her adversaries—as that the mysteries of the Christian faith are historical facts, and that we should bear in mind the humanity as well as the divinity of our Lord. But to those who would check the tender and affectionate piety of Catholics, on the ground of Christ having been God, and therefore not susceptible of the sufferings which would justify such commiseration, St. Augustin replies in the lesson read during the office of tenebræ. "Passus est se teneri ut homo. Non enim teneretur nisi homo, aut videretur, nisi homo, aut cæderetur nisi homo, aut crucifigeretur, aut moveretur nisi homo. Accessit ergo homo ad illas omnes passiones quæ in illo nihil valerent, nisi esset homo. Sed si ille non esset homo, non liberaretur homo."

The mystic devotion of John of the Cross recognized the necessity of meditating on the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, and of never neglecting to represent it before the mind, as the source of all kinds of good; and in this it was distinguished from all that false mysticism which has been condemned by the Church *.

During the middle ages, men were accustomed to

* Le P. Dosithée vie de S. Jean de la Croix, Liv. III.

meditate on the circumstances of the passion with an intense emotion of humanity, as well as with the clearest penetration of spiritual intelligence, not only attending to the mystery and to the divinity, but also in order to excite their compassion the more, considering our Lord as pure man, and then, as St. Bonaventura says, beholding "juvenem elegantem, nobilissimum, et innocentissimum, et amantissimum, totum autem flagellatum et sanguine livoribusque respersum*."

What a feeling discernment, and what an attentive consideration, of all the piteous details attending the accomplishment of these stupendous mysteries, is evinced in the commentaries, to which the different parts of the office of this commemoration gave rise! Not to speak of those revelations of celestial secrets which they were instrumental in imparting to the sainted daughter of Sueden, witness the multitude of tender and acute remarks of a St. Bonaventura respecting them; as where he says that our Lord would not call the blessed Mary mother from the cross—"Ne præ amoris vehementis teneritudine amplius ipsa doleret;" and where he speaks of the strangeness of that loud cry with which our Lord gave up the ghost, which alone was sufficient to convince the centurion that he was the Son of God. The blessed Catherine of Cardonna, of the illustrious house of that name in Catalonia, allied to the kings of Arragon, and the first recluse of Spain, whose history is such a surprising scene of penitence, after enduring rigours which seemed to surpass the force of human nature, yielded at last to the intensity of her compassion for the sufferings of our Saviour. It was on Good Friday, in the year 1577, while the nuns were chanting the passion in their church, that she experienced such a violent grief from meditating on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, that she fell to the ground, and was supposed to be in her agony, although she lingered till the Monday after the resurrection†.

Along with this fervent and tender sentiment of humanity, we find, in the middle ages, a constant vigilance to guard against the errors of false mysticism; 'for," adds the seraphic doctor, "all this meditation of the life of Christ is designed to lead the mind from fleshly things

* S. Bonavent. Meditationes Vitæ Christi, cap. 77.

† Vie de St. Therese par Villefore, 99.

to what is spiritual, that we may not rest in knowing Christ in the flesh, but may proceed to adore him in his divinity:—'Bona est enim hæc meditatio carnalis, per quam vita carnalis excluditur, contemnitur, et vincitur mundus *.'" In regard, therefore, to the divine side of the mysteries commemorated, no want of spirituality was evinced by the men whose thoughts and manners we are investigating; within that sphere no one boasted of his condition, but all contented themselves with saying, "This is the day of the ignorant, the day of the obscure and humble. God is born in the flesh; God dies upon the cross; God descends upon our altars in sacramental veil. Why do you inquire the reason of the mystery? It is sufficient that it is a mystery. All things in God are above reason; nothing above faith. This day human reason yieldeth; for the Word of God—the Reason of God is born upon the earth."

Finally, it must be remembered that the religious seasons, as well as ceremonies, were regarded in a symbolic sense, of which Father John d'Avilla furnishes an instance, when he says, "Let our commencement be humility, represented in the ashes; and let our end be love, figured in the resurrection: and thus we shall have observed a good Lent and a good Easter †. "The branches of palms," to use the words of the ritual, "signify triumphs over the prince of death; but the sprigs of olive proclaim, in a manner, the arrival of spiritual unction. For that blessed multitude of men understood then that these things were prefigured; because our Redeemer, compassionating human miseries, was to fight with the prince of death for the life of the whole world, and by dying was to triumph. And therefore they dutifully ministered such things as signified in him the triumph of victory and the abundance of mercy" Dionysius the Carthusian shows, that the Church represents, in the four Sundays of Advent, not only in the number of the days, but also in the order of the offices, the four advents of Christ to man—two visible in the flesh and in the majesty of final judgment, two invisible in the mind by grace and in the death of the faithful ‡.

But it is to the sermon of Richard of St. Victor, De

* Meditat. Vit. Christi, cap. 98.
† Epist. VIII. ‡ De Judic. Anim. 2.

Gemino Paschale, that we should be referred if we desired to form a just idea of the sublime symbolism belonging to the ecclesiastical festivals and rites during the middle ages. "We celebrate," says this great doctor, "a two-fold paschal feast; the former of which is commonly called the floral pasch—sweet and acceptable time! and the latter the fruitful pasch, which is its completion. Both are interpreted a passage; both are grateful and full of joy. The first is that by which we pass from malice to justice; the second, that by which we pass from misery to glory. Brethren, to what end do we say this? or what do we think of this transit? What will it be to pass from iniquity to goodness, from calamity to beatitude? Do you see then with what exultation we ought to celebrate this two-fold solemnity? I wish that all would study as much to be good as to be happy: then truly would they be both happy and good. I wish they would as much affect the beginning as the end of the just. 'Let my soul,' says Balaam, 'die the death of the just, and let my last end be like his.' But they who wish to have that end, must study to have the same commencement: they must flower in the meanwhile from justice, that they may have their fruit afterwards of eternal life: for it is from a just and good that they can have an eternal and happy life. Let the floral pasch therefore precede the fruitful, that in the mean while, by passing from vice to virtue, we may hereafter pass from misery to happiness. Why do men assemble on this day for a procession? It will be a good procession if we ourselves make a progress in good. What a beauteous procession to pass from virtue to virtue, forgetting what is behind, and hastening on to what is before. O what flowers are true virtues! Let us strew our way with them, and over the enamel of virtues let us pass on. Let us proceed in purity and decorum, that we may make a fair and grateful procession, worthy of the paschal solemnity. O how pure, how joyous will it be, to walk over flowers, and through the sweets of virtue, by the crocus of charity, by the lily of chastity, by the rose of the passion, and by the violet of humility! O how excellent, how delightful a fragrance, will rise on all sides! how will it charm and attract minds to the glorious spectacle! This is the Christian, the paschal procession, after the example of Christ's procession, whom we must follow. Let us mark then whence

it begins and whither it tendeth, and by what way it passes, and how it proceeds. It begins from Bethany, it tends to Jerusalem, it passes by the Mount of Olives, it moves upon an ass. This is the procession of Christ, which Christians ought to imitate. We must tend therefore to Jerusalem; that is, to peace as our end. We must seek peace and pursue it. We must decline from evil and do good. We must have peace with our superiors, with our inferiors, with our equals, and with all men. Let us beware then how we disturb the peace of our prelates, of whom the Lord saith, 'Qui vos audit me audit.' We must wish what they wish, and dislike what they dislike, if we would reach Jerusalem, and obtain celestial peace. Hence we begin from Bethany, which is interpreted house of obedience—for we are to obey those who are eminent either in authority or sanctity or wisdom, showing honour to all, according to both human and divine institutions. But our way is by the Mount of Olives, for oil signifies the works of piety; therefore we pass by this way when we have compassion on the weak, and show mercy to them. Certainly we must remark how this conduces to true tranquillity of mind. For how can he ever obtain peace who is constantly disturbed and angry at what he sees? In the weak he will always find matter for just reprehension and for merciful tolerance. Our procession then must pass by the Mount of Olives, and our piety must increase till it can be compared to a mountain, that we may learn to bear with tranquillity of mind, not only the least, but also the greatest faults of the weak, and to sustain patiently the infirmity, both corporal and spiritual, of our neighbour.

"Having thus laid hold of the plenitude of obedience and mercy, we must seek more high for perfection: for which purpose it will be necessary to search for the ass, that as Christ approached Jerusalem seated on an ass, we may guard our virtues by the marks of humility. Who would not be filled with wonder to behold, amidst such a solemn and glorious preparation, so sordid an animal? For my part, it seems more wonderful in my eyes, that a man clothed in pontifical habits should sit upon an ass, than that he should carry in his hand that sweet wood, or bear on his head that splendid mitre. It is neither new nor strange to make a boast of virtues, but it is a great and wondrous thing, amidst so many orna-

ments of virtue, not to disdain the ass. Thus will our procession move in admirable order, if amidst the lofty graces of obedience and mercy we evince the modesty of the humble. Let us study then to be truly humble, and we shall be able to conciliate our equals: for it is between equals that envy and discord arise. But if we sit upon the ass, and hold amongst them a low and abject place, we shall cut off the root of envy. True humiliation makes peace, not only between equals, but confirms it with superiors and inferiors. Therefore for this seat we must, if necessary, send to a distance, for some have it near at hand, but to others it is far off. They who live shamefully, and commit things to be blushed for, have no need to go far in search of matter for humiliation; but they who do nothing in their lives worthy of shame, like those who come from Bethany, passing by the Mount of Olives, who celebrate the floral pasch, and strew their way with the flowers of virtue,—these I think are obliged to send to a distance for the ass, and look for matter of humiliation either in the past or future. Thus Paul being conscious to himself of nothing, was obliged to go back to the way of his ancient conversation. Mark how he returned to a distant time in search of the ass. 'Ego minimus apostolorum, qui non sum dignus vocari apostolus, quoniam persecutus sum ecclesiam Dei.' Truly, it will not be safe without having this humble bearer to meet the Hebrew youths, crying on all sides, 'Euge, euge,' because, being children, they know not wherein, nor when, nor how they ought to praise.

"This then is the mode of the procession which Christ made, and which he wishes us to make. Behold in what manner Christ passed; behold with what flowers he strewed his way, when he celebrated this floral pasch. Behold whence, and by what way, in what mode, and whither. From obedience; by piety; with humility; to peace. Remember then to strew your way also with such flowers, if you desire to keep this solemnity.

"And now, if you desire to know the fruit, recur to what is said of Christ, that rising from the dead, he dieth no more, and that at his name every knee should bow. You have seen the transit—behold then the fruit! From death to life—from tribulation to glory! Behold the second pasch! Behold the fruitful pasch! O what fruit! Life and glory! O sublime fruit! Eternal life, with

highest glory! Knowing therefore what is the fruit of obedience, let us run with all haste to Bethany, nothing doubting of the fruit, but holding for certain that this corruptible will put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality. And as piety is great gain, having the promise of the present life as well as of that which is to come, let us pass on by the Mount of Olives, in the exercise of piety, knowing without doubt that we shall receive oil for oil—the oil of joy for the oil of pity—for 'blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.' And let it not shame you to sit upon the ass, or to take the lowest place, for 'God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.' Let nothing therefore be done with contention, nothing through vain glory; but in humility, let us think every one superior to ourselves. O fool, O blind! you who will not hasten where you can find true peace! Let us run by peace to peace—by internal to eternal peace. For there is a peace which is only exterior, and there is a peace which is only interior, and there is a peace which is both one and the other. The first pertains to the flesh alone, the second to the mind alone, the third to both united. The two former we can never have at the same time in the present life, and we only hope for the third in the future. Christ came to destroy the first, to decree the second, to give the third. Let us detest then what Christ hath condemned, and let us love what he taught—for he is faithful who hath promised. Let us love internal, let us hope for eternal peace. Thus shall we celebrate the floral, thus the fruitful pasch. Thus shall we obtain that inestimable joy, which shall endure without change for ever *."

Reader—we travel slowly through this way, which is not, I hope, found sterile, or unrefreshed by the sweet dews of heaven. Here again we must pause awhile—for it will be well to examine what were the sentiments of men in ages of faith respecting the festivals of our blessed Lady; not only because the subject is in itself fruitful of tender and noble thoughts, and that it is impossible to understand the spirit of the middle ages without having studied them, but also on account of the errors respecting them which are so prevalent in modern society.

It is most true, that the Church seems to place no

* Ricardi S. Victoris de gemino Paschale,

bounds to her gratitude towards the august creature who had such a part in the ineffable mystery of human redemption, pronouncing that new fiat, no less solemn and no less efficacious than that which called down upon the universe the first rays of material light, promised in the first announcement of mercy, even before the divine Saviour. As Lewis of Granada remarks with St. Augustin, "All that we can say in praise of the blessed Virgin, falls short of what St. Matthew expresses when he says, "De quâ natus est Jesus, qui vocatur Christus*." We have before heard what St. Irenæus said respecting her in the apostolic age, for which Milton profanely proposes that he should be despised by Christians as ignorant of divinity: and similar expressions are met with in all the early Fathers. "O wondrous mystery!" exclaims Clemens Alexandrinus: "one Father of all, one Word, one Holy Spirit, and the same every where, and one only mother, and she a virgin†!" St. Augustin says, "If all our members were changed into tongues, there would not be one able to praise her sufficiently‡."

It is most true that, in the middle ages, the devotion to the mother of God was tender and profound. St. Bernard, St. Peter Damian, St. Anselm, and St. Bonaventura, are sculptured in a chapel of the Benedictine abbey of Solêmes, as being the four doctors whose eloquence in celebrating her privileges was most admired. St. Anselm, that profound and penetrating philosopher, that theologian, whom even modern writers style admirable, calls Mary "the repairer of the lost world, queen of angels§." The great disciple and master of mysterious song, who had drank so deep of the living water that wells from Holy Writ as from a fountain, who had searched into so many profound truths, and whose genius reflected such a light on every path of almighty Providence, affirms, that he who grace desireth, and comes not to her, fain would have desire fly without wings||. Coming, in the vision of his soul, to the verge of that eighth heaven, where Mary was in view, he says that the fervent band he saw there halted, and—

* In Nativitate B. Mariæ Concio, III.
† Pæd. Lib. I. c. 6. ‡ De Sanct. Serm. XXXV.
§ Lib. de Excellentia Virginis Mariæ.
|| Dante, Parad. XXXIII.

" 'Regina Cœli' sang so sweetly,
The delight hath left me never."

I should never finish were I to collect all the proofs from history of the devotion of men in ages of faith for blessed Mary: but on what ground can the moderns justify their displeasure at finding it to be so? How can any expression of the Church or of the holy Fathers be considered an exaggeration, indicating an unguarded utterance, when we know that the Holy Spirit guides the former, and when we find the concert of the latter so unanimous? The true solution can be given in few words. When once a people is convinced that Christ is God, and that the words of the Evangelist, styling him, in reference to Mary, her Son *, are rightly adduced by Dun Scotus, to silence the subtle distinctions physico-theologo of active and passive, urged by some disputants against the faith of the Church, there can be no alternative for that people but to admit the exercise of devotion to the mother of God, in obedience to the dictates of natural reason and the conscience of the human race.

" Rejoice, O father Adam, and thou, O mother Eve, be comforted," exclaims St. Bernard, " for a daughter is born that will take away your reproach, and the man shall no longer have reason cruelly to accuse the woman, because if man fell by woman, he cannot be raised up unless by woman. What sayest thou, O Adam? 'The woman whom thou gavest to me, gave me of the tree, and I did eat.' These are words of malice, which rather increase than cancel thy fault. But change now the word of guilty excuse into thanksgiving, and say, 'Lord, the woman whom thou gavest to me gave me of the tree of life, and I did eat, and it is sweeter than honey to my tongue, because in it thou hast given me life eternal †.'"

The devotion of the ages of faith to the blessed Virgin, recommends itself to the understanding and to the heart of all Christians, on account of her high privilege, through regard to the love which Christ our Lord must have borne for her—and none of his affections we need be ashamed to cultivate—on account of her own extraordinary virtues, through tenderness for her sorrows, and finally, from a consideration of the benefit which

* Matt. i. † Hom. II. super Missus est.

must result to ourselves in consequence of its cultivation. Of the first motive we have already spoken in brief; and words need not be multiplied to enforce a truth which is obvious to the intelligence, and as clear as any conclusion of the severest dialectician. Let us proceed to examine the other inducements, which are drawn conjointly from the understanding and the heart. It is of faith that Christ was perfect man; consequently, independent even of faith, as supremely virtuous, he must have possessed, in an eminent degree, the sweetest and best of all human affections, maternal love. O who can estimate the love of a son for his mother! How constant is nature in all ages! But lately we read of a young man miserably slain, who spoke no other words at his death but these: "Ah! what will my poor mother say?" One of the most affecting pages of history furnishes an instance precisely similar. The young Conradin on the scaffold uttered only this cry, "O my mother! what grief will the news of me cause to you!" That mother, the Empress Marguerite, was hastening from the centre of Germany to redeem his life. Arrived too late, she consecrated the price to found the Monastery del Carmine, in which she is represented with a purse in her hand. Can any one conceive it possible, that the humane, the affectionate, the tender Jesus, who had wept for Lazarus and prayed for his murderers, should have felt no emotions of this kind for blessed Mary, his virgin mother, who reclined beneath his cross, her bosom pierced with a sword? Can we then imitate Jesus, and regard with the eyes of a mathematician, the severity of a stoic, or the scorn of a cynic, that desolate mother, to whom he was so long subject? Again, independent of her amazing privileges, and without any reference to the example of her divine Son, is not devotion due to her from a consideration of her virtues; virtues the most eminent gift of highest God, and such as one might suppose it was impossible for the frail vessel of humanity to receive or retain in a similar degree?

> ———— "Whatsoe'er may be
> Of excellence in creature, pity mild,
> Relenting mercy, large munificence,
> Are all combin'd in her *."

* Dante, Parad. XXXIII.

How men meditated on these graces in the middle ages, may be witnessed even in the rules of many institutions, which had regard to them in all that they enjoined. Those of the order of the Annunciation, founded by Jeanne de Valois, comprise ten chapters, which treat successively on the chastity, prudence, humility, faith, devotion, obedience, poverty, patience, piety, sorrow, and compassion of Mary. But it is from the writings of a St. Anselm or a St. Bonaventura that one may best learn how to speak her praise. "Ave Maria; rightly," adds the latter, "is she addressed with the salutation 'Ave,' who was most safe from all the woe of sin; for 'Ave' is the same as 'without woe.'"

Let us consider that triple woe, from which she was most secure. There is the woe of sin, the woe of misery, and the woe of hell. Of these three we read in the Apocalypse, when John says that he "heard one like an eagle flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." But behold each of these three, alas! is multiplied by three, so that there are nine woes; for the exemption from which this salutation is due to Mary, for there are three woes of sin, and three of misery, and three of hell: from all which being guarded, she is justly greeted with "Ave."

First, of sin there is a triple woe,—from the sin of the heart, from the sin of the lips, and from the sin of deed. "Woe to you who are profound of heart, that you may hide counsel from the Lord*." "Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who are like whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful without to men, but within are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." O how far from that woe was the innocent heart of Mary! Her heart was most clean: it was not a sepulchre of vices; it was a garden and a paradise of the Holy Ghost. Since, then, Mary was so far from that woe, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

Again, of the sin of the mouth, Isaiah says, "Woe to you who call evil good, and good evil." And in the Psalms we read, "Woe to those who sin with their tongue. The poison of asps is under their lips" O how far from that woe was the innocent tongue of Mary!

* Isa. xxix.

No poison of asps was under her lips, but honey and the milk of the Holy Spirit. Was it not so when she spake that most chaste word, "Quomodo fiat istud?" Had she not honey on her tongue when she uttered that mellifluous sentence, "Ecce ancilla Domini?" Since, then, Mary was so far from the sin of the tongue, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

Again, of the sin of deed. We read in Ecclesiasticus, "Woe to the double heart, and to the wicked lips, and to the hands that do evil:" that is, Woe to the sin of deed. O how far from that woe was all the work and all the life of Mary! Neither in heart, nor in word, nor in deed, had she the least spot of sin, that the Lord might truly say of her, "Tota pulchra es amica mea, et macula non est in te."

Since, then, Mary was so far from this triple woe, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

In the second place, it is to be considered how Mary was secure from the triple woe of original misery: from the woe of birth, the woe of child-bearing, and the woe of death. Of these it was truly said, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth." Woe, therefore, of birth, in consequence of which we are all born children of wrath. O how safe from that woe was the most holy nativity of Mary, delivered from it, as it is believed, by being sanctified in the womb, so that she was never inclined to sin. Therefore, her nativity being secure from woe, we justly salute her with "Ave."

Again, of the woe of bringing forth children. We read in Genesis, when God says to Eve, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." O how secure from that woe was the pregnant and producing womb of Mary, that happy mother, who conceived without contamination, and who produced the medicine without sorrow! Since, then, Mary was secured from that woe, most justly do we salute her with "Ave."

Again, there is the woe of death, of which it is said, "Woe to you, impious men, who have left the law of the Most High: if born, you are born in malediction; and if dead, your part will be in malediction." Certainly both pious and impious will die in the malediction of ashes; but yet the woe is only applied here to the impious, to whom that turning to ashes must seem so much more odious, and of which the memory must be always

so bitter and so terrible. O how far from that woe of incineration was, as we believe, the holy body of Mary, that body, the most holy ark of God, which was made of imperishable wood; whence it is said, "Surge Domine in requiem tuam, tu et arca sanctificationis tuæ!" Therefore, justly do we salute her with "Ave."

In the third place, it is to be considered that Mary was safe, not only from the triple woe of actual sin, not only from the triple woe of original misery, but also from the triple woe of hell. This last consists in the greatness of the punishment, in its multitude, and in its duration. Of these three it may well be said, "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of earth!" To this Ezekiel alludes, saying, "Woe to the city of blood, of which I will make a great pile" The city of blood is the collection of the impious, of which there will be a great pile in the great burning of the damned. O how far from that woe of the magnitude of punishment was the magnitude of the grace and glory of Mary! of whom St. Bernard says, "As much grace as Mary was given upon earth over others, so much of especial glory hath she obtained in heaven." Since, then, Mary was so far from that woe, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

Again, the woe of hell consists not only in the magnitude of the punishment, but also in the multitude of punishments; whence it is said in Isaiah, "Woe to their souls, because evils shall be rendered unto them." He says plurally, evils, because many evils await the evil in hell. O, how far from that woe of this multitude of torments was in Mary the multitude of merits and rewards! As we read in Proverbs, "Multæ filiæ congregaverunt divitias, tu sola supergressa es universas." If we understand these daughters to signify holy souls or angelic intelligences, hath not Mary surpassed the riches of virgins, confessors, martyrs, apostles, prophets, patriarchs, and angels? Since, then, Mary was so far from that second woe of hell, justly is she addressed with "Ave."

Lastly, the woe of hell consists not only in the magnitude, not only in the multitude of punishments, but also in their perpetual duration. When it is said in the canonical Epistle of Jude, "Woe to them who have gone in the way of Cain, for whom is reserved clouds of darkness for ever;" remark that "for ever," and consider what must be the duration of that darkness which is never to have

an end; and how far from that interminable woe of hell, was the interminable glory of Mary, for whom the Lord hath prepared against that eternal darkness an eternal light in heaven! Thus, then, the most blessed Virgin Mary was far from the triple woe of hell, and far from the nine woes; and, therefore, we justly begin our address to her with saying, "Ave;" therefore, dearly beloved, let us all say to her, "Ave;" and let us pray to her that, on account of her sweetest Ave, she would pray that we may be delivered from all woe by our Lord Jesus Christ.

But let us consider again how Mary was removed from all sin: for against pride, she was most profound by humility; against envy, most affectionate by charity; against anger, most gentle by mildness; against sloth, most unwearied by industry; against avarice, most refined by poverty; against intemperance, most removed by sobriety; against luxury, most chaste by virginity.

In the first place, consider her profound humility. "Ecce ancilla Domini," were Mary's words. O wonderful and profound humility of Mary! behold an archangel speaks to Mary, who is called full of grace, the operation of the Holy Spirit is conjoined, Mary is assumed to be mother of the Lord; Mary is now preferred before all creatures; Mary is now made the queen of heaven and earth; and yet, after all this she is not lifted up, but depressed with wonderful humility, saying, "Ecce ancilla Domini!" This is against many, who, in prosperity and honours, in graces and virtues, are not humbled with Mary and with Christ, but with Eve and Lucifer! See, beloved, that Mary was also affectionate by charity; for it is Mary of whom Luke says, "Exurgens autem Maria, abiit in montana cum festivatione" She went that she might visit, that she might salute, that she might minister to Elizabeth. See how full of charity was that visitation of Mary! for in the descriptions of it there are four things named in which her charity to God and to her neighbour were fully declared, for she showed charity to her neighbour in heart, word, and deed. She had charity in her heart; and on account of this, rising up, she went into the hill country with haste; for what obliged her to hasten to that work of charity, unless the charity which was in her heart? We read that the shepherds came hastening to the manger, and that Mary went in haste to fulfil a service, and that

Zaccheus descended in haste to receive our Lord to hospitality. Woe to those who are slow to works of charity.

Again, Mary showed charity by word to her neighbour; for it is of her also that we read, "Et factum est, ut audivit salutationem Mariæ Elizabeth," &c. Charity is always to be nourished in salutations to our neighbours, and in words of charity to others. Thus, the angel saluted Mary; Mary saluted Elizabeth; the Son of Mary saluted the Marys who were going from the sepulchre, saying to them, "Avete." Woe to those who, through hatred, neglect to salute their neighbour! Woe to those who salute their neighbour deceitfully, like Judas, when he said, "Ave Rabbi." O how sweetly did Mary know how to salute! O Mary, deign to salute us by thy grace! Moreover, Mary had not only charity in her heart, not only did she show charity in word, but also she exercised it in deed; for it is of Mary that we read, "Mansit autem Maria cum illâ quasi mensibus tribus." She remained to serve and to console Elizabeth. And as she thus had charity to her neighbour, so had she, above all things, charity to God; for it is Mary who says, "Magnificat anima mea Dominum,"—for whom she loved, she sought to magnify.

In the third place, observe how Mary was most gentle and lenient; for it is of Mary that Simeon said, "Et tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius." This sword signified the sharp passion and death of her Son: a corporal sword could neither kill nor wound the soul. In like manner, the sharp passion of Christ, although it pierced through the soul of Mary by compassion, yet it could neither kill it by hatred, nor wound it by impatience: for Mary never hated the murderers of her Son, never was impatient against them. For if other martyrs were most patient in their corporal martyrdom, how much more our martyr Mary in her spiritual martyrdom! of which Jerome saith, "She was more than martyr." Alas! how far from the grace of the most gentle Mary are those who give way to roughness, and impatience, and anger, as their own domestics, companions, and neighbours often experience!

In the fourth place, observe how diligent was Mary in good works; for we read in the Acts, "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer, with the women, and with Mary, the mother of Jesus:" and mark, that

our Mary was unwearied, not alone in prayer with her lips, but also in heart, with holy meditations; for it is said in the Gospel of Luke, "Maria conservabat omnia, verba hæc conferens in corde suo." And as she was diligent in word and in heart, so also with the work of her hands; "for to this end," says the venerable Bede, "she remained three months with Elizabeth, that she might, as a younger person, serve a woman of advanced age."

"Fifthly; observe how abstemious she was by poverty. The poor shepherds found Mary, the poor mother, and the poor infant, in a poor place; not in a pompous court, but in a poor stable. Certainly whoever is poor voluntarily for God, or whoever is poor necessarily, patiently, may be much consoled by the poverty of Mary and of Christ. Far from that consolation are the wicked rich, who seek a different purpose. Nevertheless I am unwilling to despair of the rich; because not alone the poor shepherds, but also rich kings, found poor Mary and her poor Son: for the rich found them, and came with gifts. The poor found them to their consolation, by poverty; but the rich by liberality: for while the poor, by poverty, are conformed to Christ, the rich, by liberality, are reformed to him.

"Again, we shall discover the grace which sat upon the lips of Mary, if we deliberately collect her words from the Gospel; for we shall find seven mellifluous sentences proceeding from her mouth, which she spake to the angel, to man, and to God: two to the angel, two to man, and three to God. To the angel she had a word of chastity,—"Quomodo fiat istud?" and a word of humility,—"Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum." This is against the proud and arrogant, who neither think nor speak humbly of themselves, but utter words of boasting and inflation. To man she had a word of charity and a word of truth: of charity, when she so affectionately saluted the mother of the precursor, that the very infant in the womb exulted. This is against the rancorous, who either do not charitably speak to their neighbours, or who altogether disdain to speak to them; she had a word of truth, when she said to the servants, "Quodcunque dixerit vobis facite." This is against those who do not instruct others to good but to evil, and who never admonish them. Lastly, Mary had three

words to the Lord. So that she spoke more with God than with man or with the angel: for she spoke twice to the angel, and twice to man, but thrice to God. Alas! alas! against many who so seldom speak with God in prayer, and who speak so much with men in vain and often in pernicious conversation! But Mary had with God a discourse thankful, plaintive, and compassionate: thankful, with regard to herself; plaintive, for the loss of her son; and compassionate, for the failing of the wine. A thankful word, when she said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord." This is against the ungrateful, who, alas! so seldom return the smallest thanks to God for many and great benefits, but rather proudly turn the benefits of God against God. A plaintive word, when she said to her Son, after having lost him for three days, "Fili, quid fecisti nobis." "Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." This is against the irreligious, who never seek Jesus sorrowing, though they may have lost him for many days through their indevotion. Mary had a word of compassion with God, when, at the marriage feast, she said to her Son, "They have no wine." This is against the unmerciful, who are not moved by the want of piety in others, and who never exhort their neighbours. Alas! now, O Mary, behold still there is need that you suggest to your Son that there are many among us who have no wine: the wine of the grace of the Holy Spirit; the wine of compunction; the wine of piety; the wine of spiritual consolation. Of this St. Bernard says, "How often is it necessary for me, brethren, after tearful complaints, to intreat the Mother of Mercy that she would suggest to her benign Son that you have no wine; and, dearly beloved, I tell you, if you would but piously demand, there would be nothing wanting to your necessity, since she is the merciful Mother of Mercy*."

You have heard the sentiments of the ages of faith respecting the virtues of blessed Mary: let us briefly observe them in relation to the two remaining motives for devotion to her. And, first, to that of compassion for her bitter sorrows. "O tearful spectacle," cries Thomas à Kempis, "of a mother, and a son before her eyes in the act of being crucified! of a mother weeping,

* S. Bonaventuræ, Speculum Beatæ Mariæ Virginis.

and of a son speaking to her; of a mother standing under the cross, and of a son hanging from it; of a mother sighing, and of a son expiring! O magnitude of immense grief! never to be forgotten, but to be held fixedly in the hearts of the pious *!" "Consider," says St. Bonaventura, "how bitter was Mary in the bitter passion of her Son. Hence she might well have said, with Ruth, "Do not call me Naomi, that is, beautiful; but call me Mara, that is bitter: because the Lord hath greatly filled me with bitterness." She was bitter, because her two sons were dead; and Mary, too, was beautiful, by the sanctification of the Holy Ghost; but bitter by the passion of her Son. The two sons of Mary are God, made man, and pure man; for of the one she is corporally, and of the other spiritually, the mother. Whence the blessed Bernard says, "You are the mother of a King, the mother of an exile, the mother of God, the mother of man. These two sons of Mary were both dead in the passion: the one in the body, the other in mind; the one in the bitterness of the cross, the other in the infidelity of the soul. And, therefore, the bowels of Mary were filled with bitterness †."

It only remains to observe the sentiments of men in these ages respecting the benefit which resulted to themselves from their devotion to Mary. True, they believed that a great sign of one's predestination or reprobation is his devotion or indifference to the Mother of God. St. Anselm says, "As it is necessary, O blessed Virgin, that he who loseth thy favour should, with it, lose his eternal salvation, so it is impossible that any in thy favour should perish." And St. Bonaventura says, "The grace of God will sanctify that heart which worthily serveth thee; and he that neglecteth thee, shall die in his sins, as a punishment for such a neglect." But is there ground to justify the censure passed upon St. Bonaventura, St. Anselm, and St. Bernard, by a recent author, who affirms that they ascribed to the blessed Virgin a rank higher than either reason or true piety would assign? There are, at least, some who are not quite prepared to concede at once that such men were deficient either in reason or in piety. Methinks the modern

* Sermonum, III. 2.

† Spec. B. Mariæ Virg. Lect. III.

reader ought to have been warned from drawing any rash conclusion here. If the recollects of Liege said that the worship of the blessed Virgin, even in those who lived gentilely was a sign of predestination, they spoke to men who knew their meaning, and who, therefore, received their words as teaching it to be a sign that they would cease to live gentilely; and if Francis Mendoza said, it was impossible that such a person should perish, his readers interpreted his words as teaching that it was impossible he should not be converted to a holy life; and this precisely on the principle which every one concedes to St. Ambrose, when he said to the holy widow of Ostia, who mourned over the errors of her predestinated child, that it was impossible the son of such tears should eventually be lost for ever. These men judged from traditionary observation, as also from personal experience; and I conceive that the acutest brain would be a little perplexed, if called upon to show what there was in the opinion itself that could justify any man in qualifying it as a wretched extravagance, the excess or perversion of religious belief. On the other hand, would it be very difficult to qualify that mind which could not be made to comprehend why a secret reverence for the blessed Mother of Jesus should furnish proof that the sparks of virtue were not wholly extinguished in the heart?

The doctrine of the immaculate conception, though not an article of faith, was yet the natural conclusion of a devout mind; and men were taught by the writers who defended it, that "it would be to no purpose to be jealous in advocating the purity of Mary, if they were not most careful to preserve purity in themselves."

Hereafter there will be occasion to show that there was no point of religion in the middle ages which interfered with the belief in the doctrine of the atonement; but, for the present, hear what say the doctors most eloquent in setting forth the benefits which we derive from the prayers of Mary. St. Bonaventura begins his Mirror with these words:—"Since, as the blessed Jerome saith, 'There is no doubt to any one but that all pertains to the glory and praise of God whatever is worthily ascribed to his Son, so to the praise and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ,' I have undertaken to express something concerning the praise and glory of his blessed

Mother." St. Anselm speaks as clearly* to the same effect; and the universal spirit of this devotion is expressed in the words of St. Bonaventura, in addressing her:—"Sic in te vis homines jucundari, ut semper in eum, cujus Mater es, refundatur affectus†." But that they believed her example, her merits, and her intercession to be of great avail to the children of Eve, is a fact which no Catholic will be disposed to doubt. After hearing the words of the seraphic doctor, speaking on this head, we may rise and proceed:—"Consider," saith he, "how Mary is interpreted the Star of the Sea." We read that it is the custom of sailors, when about to navigate, to choose some one star, by whose rays they may be guided so as to make the desired land. This is the office which is discharged by our star Mary, which directeth those who are navigating through the sea of the world, in the ship of innocence or of penitence, to the shore of their heavenly country. Innocent, in allusion to this, asks by what assistance can ships escape through so many perils to the shores of their country? Certainly by means of wood and a star: that is, by the faith of the cross, and by virtue of the light which Mary, our star, affordeth to us, our Star of the Sea, the purest, most radiant, most useful star; for such is the lustre of that star, which rose out of Jacob, that it illumined the universal orb, reaching to the height of heaven, and penetrating to the profoundest depths of hell. Mary is a light to enlighten the world by the example of her life, by the benefits of her compassion, and by the rewards of her glory. Consider, first, that Mary is a light to enlighten many, by the example of her bright life. St. Bernard says, "He that will follow your ways, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Secondly, consider that she enlightens us by the benefits of her compassion; from which it is that many are spiritually enlightened in the night of this world. And, thirdly, consider that she is a light by the glory of her rewards: for Mary is the most excellent work of God; and as she was filled with grace in the world, so she is full of glory in heaven. "You see, then, how Mary is the Star of the Sea, and how she is a light to enlighten and

* Medit. Cap. VI. B. 1.
† Stimulus Divin. Amoris, Pars III. c. 16.

direct us. Therefore, dearly beloved, let us pray to Mary, that, in true penitence, we may become wholly bitter, that we may be spiritually guided through the sea of this world, and that hereafter we may be shone upon by the rays of eternal glory, through our Lord Jesus Christ *. Therefore, we may well implore Mary, as Abraham besought Sara, saying, 'Say, I pray thee, that thou art my sister, that it may be well with me on account of thee, and that my soul may live for thy sake.' O, then, Mary! O our Sara! say that thou art our sister, that on thy account it may be well with us from God; that, for thy sake, our souls may live in God. Say, I pray thee, O our dearest Sara! that thou art our sister; that, on account of such a sister, the Ægyptians, that is, the demons, may reverence us; that, on account of such a sister, the angels may join themselves in company with us; that, on account of such a sister, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, may have mercy upon us †."

Having now heard what were the sentiments and views generally entertained during the middle ages with respect to the festivals of the Church, the present would be the proper place for considering the arguments brought against them by the adversaries and lukewarm followers of our faith, who persist in calling for their suppression. "I am filled with joy this day," says St. Augustin, "on account of the great festival of St. Peter and St. Paul; but yet I am somewhat sad, because I do not behold such a multitude assembled as ought to be found on the nativity of the Passion of the Apostles ‡." Alas, what would be his language now, if, in countries exposed to the atmosphere of the new opinions, he witnessed the desertion and silence of the holy churches on days of obligation! But what need here of many words to show how excellent a thing it must be to "celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought, with high providence, in his Church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just men against the enemies of Christ, in fine, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave,—whatsoever hath passion or

* Lect. III. † Lect. VI. ‡ § 298.

admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtilties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within,—all these things, with a solemn and unchanging form of emblematic imagery and of inspiring sounds, and of majestic words to point out and describe?" Hesiod, in his works and days, and Aratus, speaking of God, express the testimony of the human soul to the importance of regarding seasons and hours in all the affairs of life. By the jurisconsults and legislators of the middle ages, attention to them is considered as belonging essentially to that wisdom of government which should characterize every Christian state *. Who object to the Catholic festivals, but the men who already stand condemned in the Gospel of the marriage feast! "Cæperunt omnes simul excusare. Villam emi, Juga bovum emi quinque; non possum venire." Here was industry and necessity, indeed, sufficient, one might suppose, to justify the suppression of any obstacle. Yet we know what was their sentence. The language of the moderns, on this head, reminds one of Seneca's objection, when he affirms that the Sabbath day caused the Jews to lose almost the seventh part of their lives, and to suffer many losses, from its not allowing them to work incessantly; but, without referring to the wisdom of the Church, to the tender affections of her children, and to the charity of the rich, which provided against the injury of the poor—surely an answer may be found in the writings of the ancients, the solid excellence of whose natural reason conforms with such admirable precision to the principles of faith? The Athenian, in Plato, shows that the gods, in pity for the laborious life of men, determined that there should be intervals of repose dedicated to their worship, to the muses, and to Bacchus; and hence he says the festivals of religion were an institution of celestial mercy †.

Let any man contemplate the order of society which succeeded to that of the ancient states, and he will find no ground for concluding that the same wants had not continued, notwithstanding the influence of the Christian liberty. It is not the interests of the poor alone that would convince a thoughtful and benevolent observer of

* Gregorius Tholosanus Præludia Jurisconsulti, Lib. IV.
† De Legibus, Lib. II.

the importance of the festivals. How they stood in relation to those things, is sufficiently obvious to every one. But there is a race belonging to a higher class of society which, I think, would supply him, if possible, with still stronger arguments for preserving the ecclesiastical discipline in all its integrity. Only let him observe what takes place in the houses of the rich: how a multitude of wretched and involuntary captives are there constantly retained, slaves of custom, that stern, that unspiritual instructor, who can have no hopes of any respite from the evils of the world's vanity, unless from the interposition of the Church; children of a mysterious and calamitous doom, who must perish in unmingled bitterness, unless the festival shall succeed, from time to time, to remind them of a happier world, and to assuage their thirst, by presenting them with the memory and the anticipations of justice. Only let him observe that nothing short of the necessity of an universally recognized obligation can secure them the moral refreshment which is indispensable to their spiritual existence, and, without taking into account the interests of any other class, methinks he must arrive at the conclusion, that the suppression of Catholic festivals, wherever it takes place, and under whatever circumstances, must be always an irremediable calamity to the race of men.

After Anacharsis had visited the different states of Greece, he is reported to have said that "all wanted leisure and tranquillity for wisdom, except the Lacedæmonians, for that these were the only persons with whom it was possible to hold a rational conversation." "The life of all the other Greeks," adds Müller, "had doubtless appeared to him as a restless and unquiet existence, a constant struggle without any object." And it is curious to remark how many writers have dwelt on the tedium and listlessness of a Spartan life, as well as on that of a Catholic country which has retained the discipline of ages of faith. Yet Lord Bacon himself makes the remark, that, "in the distribution of days, that wherein God did rest and contemplate his own works, was blessed above all the days wherein he did effect and accomplish them *."

In the middle ages, men were industrious and indefa-

* Advancement of Learning.

tigable: unnumbered monuments have they left behind of having passed an active existence; and yet we never observe them complaining of the number of ecclesiastical festivals, or lamenting their institution. The desire of every heart seemed to be expressed in that verse of the Psalm, "Unam petii a Domino, hanc requiram: ut inhabitem in domo Domini omnibus diebus vitæ meæ; ut videam voluptatem Domini, et visitem templum ejus." The prayer of the minstrel used to be, that every day in the week might be Sunday *, and Columbus used to observe the festivals of the Church during the perils of his expedition, in the wildest parts of the new discovered world.

Who wishes to abolish the festivals of the Catholic Church? Not the poor man, whom they console; not the holy man, whom they nourish; not the meekly learned man, whose labour they assist; not the artist or poet, to whom they supply such sweet and glorious visions. But the Christian pastors are called upon to suppress the festivals, to gratify a few insolent and gloomy pedants, who, in the pride of their political or literary fame, mistake genius for superstition, and faith for insanity. Remorseless task-masters, who impose worse than Herculean labours upon the sons and daughters of the poor; immediate authors of what Æschylus ascribes, in the first instance, to the Furies,—

——— "ἀνδροκμῆτας
δ' ἀώρους τύχας †."

of the fortunes that slay men prematurely. Therefore, they say in their hearts, "Quiescere faciamus omnes dies festos Dei à terra ‡." "Thou shalt return no more to this world of dreams," say these men of false wisdom, in the same breath confessing the wretchedness of their own state, "Thou shalt return no more to this world of dreams. Go! forget these mitres of light, these aureoles, these chants, these seraphs. The voice of the archangels has finished for thee. Cast away thy remembrances, thy infinite hopes. Real life is somewhat different from the fancies of youth. Follow us, and we will

* Legrand, d'Aussi, Fabliau, Tom. II. 26.
† Eumenid. 956. ‡ Ps. lxxiii.

show thee things that thou hast never seen—the source dried up, the rind withered, the heart broken, the cup empty." Lo, what a vapour of malediction comes from mortal lips! The earth is become dark and cold. In those streets where a new civilization declares that God in sacramental presence shall never pass, the dust now drinks the black blood of the citizens, which brings with it again fresh retributive murders with unforgiving rage.

Yes, assuredly, "the poor man bent to the earth, oppressed with fatigue, and uncertain whether he will obtain sufficient support for his subsistence, the rich man, surrounded with things in which the world places happiness, and astonished every moment not to find himself happy, ever striving after some object which he does not possess; the man cast down by misfortunes, and the man intoxicated with a prosperous success, the man immersed in delights, and the man devoted to the attractions of science, the powerful, the obscure, all, in short, find in every object an obstacle against rising to the Divinity—a force which tends to bind them to something for which we have not been created, to make them belie the nobleness of their origin and the importance of their end."—"What wisdom then," exclaims Manzoni, "in the ordination of the Christian festivals, which give all men an occasion and an excitement to escape from this state of subjection*!"

Moreover, it is certain that the mind was confirmed in its belief of all the facts of the Christian religion by means of these institutions. In all the monuments with which they were surrounded, in the temples every where erected, in the annual festivals of the nativity, the epiphany, the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, and in the pentecost, which was the day of solemn mission to the apostles, men saw, and as it were felt with their hands, the evidence in proof of their faith; so that when grown up to maturer years, they could no more doubt respecting the miracles ascribed to Christ and to his apostles, than the facts relating to the history of their own nation, the series of their kings, or any other circumstances respecting them.

Had one only followed the ceremonies of the Church in a Catholic country but once during the passion and the

* Osservazioni Sulla Morale Cattolica, cap. 5.

festivals of Easter, it would have been sufficient to have impressed the understanding ever afterwards with a conviction, that the events thus commemorated must have occurred, and in that sense at least to have secured the fulfilment of her desire, where she prays that the receiving of the paschal sacrament may ever remain in our minds. Thus was formed that Christian faith even in those who could not express its origin in clear words; and they were not more able to give a reason for their conviction of innumerable other facts, which they could not have denied, without being regarded by all men as stupid and insane *.

The moderns read about our Lord as they do about any remarkable historic personage; Catholics, in ages of faith, by means of the festivals and ceremonies of the Church, may be said to have actually lived with him. Religion in the former is but a speculative opinion; in the latter it was a real and personal experience. Custom served them better than innumerable reasons, which, however solid, cannot be always present to the mind. Metaphysical proofs strike but little; and even when they do avail with some, it is only during the instant while the demonstration is seen: for in an hour after, men fear that they were deceived. "Quod curiositate cognoverint, superbiâ amiserunt." The Church, by her festivals and ceremonies, imbued, and as it were, dyed the souls of men with belief, so that they had that habitual faith, which Paschal says is absolutely essential independent of conviction, since we have a body as well as a soul; and that the senses impel us to believe the contrary.

But if there were advantages resulting to the understanding from the institution of the Christian festivals, still more were they conducive to important ends in the economy of the interior life, as directing the emotions of the heart in subordination to faith. What are the poor solitary meditations of an individual, let him be ever so wise and holy, if compared with the realities which just men find in the anniversaries celebrated by the devout people? At each recurrence of the holy time, methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosom, and the sweet odour of the remembered Gospel imbathe the soul with the fragrancy of heaven. This re-

* La Hogue Tractat. de Religione, Q. V. cap. 2.

sult was not left depending upon the force of any natural and general law; it was secured by a number of positive exercises connected with their celebration: for at all the principal feasts, holy exercises were renewed, and the suffrages of the saints were fervently implored.

In cathedrals and parishes, the approach of a solemn day might have been easily foreseen, by observing what were the numbers that waited at confessionals. Even to the peasant, remote from cities, the vigil would be announced by the light, which threw its beams far over wood and waste, issuing from the turret of the castle chapel—a well-known sign to him, by which he would know that at that moment the inmates were making holy preparation for a blessed morrow. Every where, from festival to festival, men were always looking forward, and resolving to celebrate each, as if it were to usher them unto the eternal festival of the future world *. Above all, the fast of Lent, with its repeated instructions, and the solemn rites of the succeeding anniversaries, was always found effectual in sanctifying a multitude of souls for the rest of the year. To celebrate the least festival in the true spirit of the Church, and in conformity to her injunctions, was, as she herself expresses it, "to be filled with the eternal fruition of the divinity of God, which is prefigured by the temporal reception of his precious body and blood." We see that, in the most solemn commemoration of the highest ineffable mysteries, her chief, indeed her sole solicitude, is to promote the virtue of her children. This breaks forth even amidst the transports with which she prepares to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. "Hujus igitur sanctificatio noctis fugat sceleros," she exclaims at the benediction of the paschal candle; "culpas lavat, et reddet innocentiam lapsis, et mœstis lætitiam: fugat odia, concordiam parat, et curvat imperia."

Thus, in fine, were earthly desires mitigated, and minds trained to love celestial things. Men were purified from all vile inclinations, and enticed to renounce trivial and degrading objects—they acquired an exquisite sense, and an ardent love of what is just, in morals as in art, in matters of religion, as well as in all the relations of human society; and thus by degrees weaned

* De Imit. Christi. Lit. I. 19.

sweetly and imperceptibly from all that was intrinsically perishable and vain, they were prepared to arrive at the great destiny of their nature—the immortal possession of God.

Already have the just limits of this chapter been overpast, and yet we have still to consider the ecclesiastical festivals in the same point of view in relation to the anniversaries of the saints.

In the Pagan mythology, the honour of apotheosis was granted to the authors of new arts and commodities.—Ceres, Bacchus, Mercurius; and with the moderns, "relatio inter divos," seems to be considered as due only to the same kind of merit, to the inventors of printing, of steam-engines, of machinery to facilitate the production of articles of trade, or of scientific instruments conducive to the development of national industry; in short, to the inventors or improvers of things appertaining to Vulcan or Dædalus. These are the persons to whom, as eminently useful to society, the supreme honour which man can attribute unto man is given; though, independent of all truths of theology, their merit is certainly mixed with strife and perturbation. Middleton indeed says expressly, that he would rather with Pagan Rome pay divine honours (a remarkable expression from one who professes himself a champion against idolatry) to the founders of empires, than with Popish Rome to the founders of monasteries: "For my part," he says, "I should sooner be tempted to prostrate myself before the statue of a Romulus or an Antonine, than that of a Laurence or a Damian." For such a judgment, the voice of mankind during the middle ages would have had no other compliment but St. Jerome's to Vigilantius—"O infelicem hominem, et omni lacrymarum fonte plangendum!"—Well indeed might the voice of that ancient society have sounded strange to one who had such thoughts, when in unison with holy Church it besought God, while making its offering in commemoration of his saints, that as suffering made them glorious, so devotion might render it innocent, through its Lord and Redeemer*.

But what skills it to win a fading triumphant laurel out of the tears of wretched men? or how could the vain and sanguinary trophies of human ambition be associated with

* For St. Stephen.

the golden vials full of sweet perfumes, which are the prayers of the saints? In determining the proper objects of Hyperdulia—which is the service or worship due to excellent creatures, Latria being the worship due to God alone, by faith, hope, and charity, and Dulia being the service due to ordinary creatures, as the ancient schoolmen distinguished*—how could there be a question between the type of Middleton and that of the Roman Pontiffs? The wisdom of the Church, like the Minerva of Æschylus, required that nothing but what contributed to the object of a blameless victory, should be sung to her favoured people—

ὁποῖα νίκης μὴ κακῆς ἐπίσκοπα†.

And as for the objection of heretics, if those who followed humbly and perseveringly in the way of the cross, were not to be honoured by men, would the Psalmist have said, "Mihi nimis honorati sunt amici tui Deus?" Christ teaches us that they are honoured by God. "Si quis mihi ministraverit, honorificabit eum Pater meus qui in cœlis est‡?" Moses prayed to the Almighty, saying, "Recordare Domine Abraham, Isaac, et Jacob, servorum tuorum§:" and Jacob, in his benediction, added, "Et invocetur super eos nomen meum, nomina quoque patrum meorum Abraham et Isaac."—"Job autem servus meus orabit pro vobis," says God himself; "faciem ejus suscipiam, ut non vobis imputetur stultitia‖."

Justly, therefore, did the generations of the middle ages conclude, that the intercession of saints is not a contradiction to the atonement of the Son of God: and truly just was it that they should rejoice in the temporal duty of commemorating their victories, when it was their prayer that they might exult in beholding them for eternity¶.

Let us, however, hear St. Anselm, who had such a tender devotion for the saints and for the mother of God. "What other intercessor can I obtain in thy presence, but him who was made the expiatory victim for sins—

* S. Boneventura Declaratio Terminorum Theologiæ.
† Eumenid. 903.
‡ Joan. xii.
§ Exod. xxxii.
‖ Cap. xlii.
¶ P. C. Com. of 1 M.

who is seated at thy right hand—and who, from the midst of the ineffable glory of which he partakes with thee, implores for us thy clemency? He it is who is my advocate with God the Father; he is that sovereign pontiff, who has no need of shedding other blood to expiate sins; his own blood shed for us flows yet from all his wounds.—Behold, O my God, the holy victim—the perfect victim—which is agreeable to thee. Behold the spotless lamb, who kept silence in presence of his shearers. Behold him, who without having committed sin, charged himself with our sins, and who has put an end to all our miseries by the torments of his agony *!"

Who can imagine, to use the language of antiquity, that the rich man buried in hell should evince such solicitude for the salvation of his brethren, and that the saints in heaven should have no care for the lot of their fellow-citizens, still combating? If any one asked how could this be, he was referred to St. Augustin, who acknowledges that to understand in what manner the martyrs hear the invocations of men at different places on the earth, exceeds the power of human intelligence †. If the especial devotion to particular saints at certain places was objected to, the wisdom of the same great doctor could have been urged in reply; for when relating the miracles wrought by St. Stephen's relics, he does not fancy St. Stephen to be busy, and ambitious in advancing the peculiar honour of his altar, and promoting his own private glory and worship, in preference to his competitors, with a neglect of the general advancement of religion and piety among men. It is besides a fact of history, that while the bodies of holy martyrs and saints have been borne along in procession with the prayers of devout people, plagues have been suddenly stopped; so that the anniversary has been ever after celebrated with religious joy in the city which had been delivered. Truly affecting and sublime to the eye of faith is the spectacle of that crowd, which for nine days and nights continually presses round the tomb of a saint, leaving offerings upon it in such abundance, that Churches can be built without other means, covering it with their burning tapers, and carrying away, as a domestic treasure, the flowers and pictures which have touched it.

* S. Anselmi Meditat. c. 6. † Lib. de Curâ pro Mortuis, 16.

In the constitutions called Apostolical, the faithful are invited to visit the prisons of the witnesses of Christ, from the motive of being rendered partakers of their contest by exhibiting their will towards them.

Of Charlemagne we read, that he made a pilgrimage from Rouen to Tours, following the sea-shore and then mounting the Loire, to visit the Church of St. Martin, for the sake of prayer. Frodoard and Glanber make mention of many great men who repaired to the tomb of that glorious confessor. We read that the old hermit John, who lived in a cave near the town of Sochus, had so great a reverence for the martyrs, that he would often travel over the desert to visit their shrines, one time going to Ephesus to St John; at another to Euchaita to St. Theodore; at another to St. Thecla, in Seleucia of Isauria; at another to St. Sergius, in Saraphas; and so on*.

By the ancient laws of France, the being on a pilgrimage in honour of some saint of God, was a legal plea to excuse non-residence where the right of citizenship was desired, which otherwise could not be obtained without a corporal residence in the place, from the festival of All Saints to that of St. John the Baptist†.

Truly admirable was the operation of that faith which preserved with such zeal the memory of Christian heroes, whom the Almighty has signalized as his favourites, and crowned with eternal bliss. Truly efficacious was that honour and veneration paid to them by all, from the lowest to the highest rank of mankind. The anniversaries of the saints kindled wondrous devotion, by leading the mind back to the first ages of Christianity; transporting, as it were, the Christians of the most remote regions into the ancient basilicas of the martyrs at Rome and Constantinople, and thus propagating throughout the world the apostolic spirit and heroic constancy of the first generous champions of Jesus Christ; exciting men, as the Church says, after their example, to despise, for the love of God, the prosperous things of the earth, and to fear not its adversity. The mere recalling of such names as those that occur in the canon of the mass, was sufficient to establish hearts in the love of God for ever. In some ancient liturgies, the names recited were more numerous. In

* Sophronii Prat. Spirituale, cap. 180.

† Pasquier Recherches de la France, Lib. IV. 7.

the Ambrosian, twenty-four martyrs are named within the action; in the Mozarabic, the names of forty-six are mentioned; and in the ancient Gallican sacramentary, the names of Hilary, Martin, Ambrose, Augustin, Gregory, Jerome, and Benedict, are added to those of the twelve apostles and of twelve martyrs. In the first ages of the Church, the diptycha sanctorum, or anniversary books, were employed to perpetuate the names of the martyrs whose nativities were commemorated *. A Roman calendar of the fourth age was brought to light by Bucherius †; and another of the second century by Mabillon, from a manuscript in the monastery of Cluny. Although the use of these diptychs of the Primitive Church had become obsolete in the middle ages, the people nevertheless continued to be no less familiar with the acts of the martyrs. On each festival, rythmed sequences, sung before the Gospel, commemorated the most remarkable events in the history of the saint; and it was usual to read publicly in parish churches a short account of his life and passion. Thus we find the passion of the holy martyrs, Valentine and Damian, Bishops of Terracina, divided into nine lessons, for the purpose of being publicly read in that church ‡. Many legends still exist, composed in old French rhyme, which in the seventeenth century were generally laid aside for prose narratives §. De la Barre speaks of an ancient legendary, which he found enclosed within an iron grate on a pillar in the Church of our Lady at Corbeil, from which he learned certain events that had occurred there in the time of Philippe-le-Long ||.

"As often as we celebrate the solemn anniversaries of the saints," says St. Ouen, in his history of St. Eloy, "we ought to recite something from their acts in praise of Christ for the edification of the Christian people; since whatever is laudable in his saints, is truly the gift of Christ ¶."

Invariably, indeed, do we find the clergy of the middle

* Salig. de Diptychis Veterum, cap. 1.
† Comment. in Vict. Aquit. Canon Pasch, cap. 15, f. 267.
‡ Italia Sacra, I.
§ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, X. 42.
|| Antiquitez de Corbeil, Liv. II. c. 12.
¶ Vita S. Elegii Episcop. S. Audœni Episcop. Auct. Prolog.

ages instructing the people with respect to these anniversaries. "Brethren," says an ancient chronicler, "as often as we celebrate the solemnities of the saints with a faithful mind, we ought to consider, that as they continually pray to God in behalf of human labours, so we have especial ground to hope, when we are more particularly attentive to the praises of God on account of their glory. Therefore we must take care with pious attention, that what we externally signify in appearance we may internally hold fast in truth; and then we shall be strengthened outwardly in work when within we are reformed in mind: for the solemnity of the saints is the salvation and joy of the faithful, who now rejoice for that invention whence we are sustained by hope on our journey, that by the grace of God we may come to the society of those whose examples we imitate by faith and works: for they, holding fast the anchor of hope, by desire imitated Christ in his death, and by the cup of his passion, gained the rewards of eternal felicity *."

The reading of the Martyrology suggests some fine reflections to holy men. "For what shall we have to say," says St. Ephrem, "in that dreadful day of final judgment, when the blessed martyrs of Christ, standing near the throne of glory, will show their wounds, and the atrocious cruelties which they have suffered in their bodies? We, I say, my dearest brethren, what shall we have then to show? what virtues to produce? Shall we have charity towards God and our neighbour? Shall we have whole and inviolable faith? Shall we have voluntary poverty and privation? Shall we have peace and tranquillity? Shall we have alms? Shall we have the affection of pity? Shall we have the spirit of gentleness? Shall we have pure prayers—salutary compunction, vigils, tears, and true penitence? Happy shall we be if we can then produce such testimonies? Then we shall be associated in the choir of the saints, and become partakers of their crown †."

There still remains an advantage resulting from the festivals of the Church—of which we have as yet taken no notice—which recommends itself to the attention of

* Chronicon Mosomense apud Dacher Spicileg. Tom. VII. 523.

† Eph. Sec. de Laudit. Sanct. Mart.

those who cultivate political wisdom; for there is nothing more certain, than that they contributed to preserve the temporal order of society, by rendering the people content with their position in the present, and happy in the prospect of the future world.

Cardan, speaking in general of religion, says that the people of Sienna and of Florence, in constructing their cathedrals with such marvellous magnificence, and in lavishing upon them all the riches of art, so that every part seemed equally elaborate, have given an example of wisdom to the world. The temple of St. Mark at Venice and of St. Dionysius at Paris, appear to him similarly as monuments of the highest wisdom. "Sapienter hæc omnia non solum pie," saith he, in his elaborate work on Wisdom *.

Without referring to the supernatural rewards of eminent piety, it is clear that these rites and anniversaries caused the people, with one mind, and by a judgment fruitful in general utility, to have loves and dislikes in common: a compensation, or rather a remedy, as Æschylus affirms,

"For many woes that wait on mortal life."

True, the whole importance of what are styled principles of taste, as connected with popular manners and the external order of life, has been underrated by the sophists, who govern the modern society; and that in proportion as it was better understood and more clearly demonstrated by true philosophers. "We must confess," says Fries, "that among the people of the present higher European cultivation in general, to promote this art, which consists in the development and direction of sentiment and taste as an important object of attention, would appear a folly; and whoever should entertain such a desire, would seem to have a fancy fitted only for departed and distant times: for in truth, to receive this spirit of beauty in the external life, these people are still too greedy, avaricious, and warlike. Through greediness and avarice they have been obliged to limit still more and more the number of festival days, in order that

* Hieronymi Cardani de Sapientia, Lib. III.

they might work, and collect the more. While they regard murder on a great scale as their necessary, and even as their heroic work, they must employ the best part of their public power in building fortresses and in maintaining armed idlers; so that, when root and branch are thus wanting, it is in vain to look for the ornament of blossom and flower *." But yet, without referring to the religious operation, remark only these popular customs and traditions interwoven with them, and you will discern with Marchangy, how, under an apparent frivolity, powerful and beneficial influences lived and acted. The ambition of men was satisfied at a small expense, by means of the annual circle of domestic fêtes and local promotions: their passions were sanctified by immemorial anniversaries and traditions: and thus, in the great relations of social life, were united the intellectual and sentimental interests of positive religion, and the practical interest of the state.

The value of these innocent institutions has been discovered by the fearful void which their abolition has left in society. The small money having been suppressed, only the great is put into circulation, for which every one disputes with confusion and rage †.

Those who attach importance to the refinement of a nation, will observe, that the cultivation of a taste for the beauties of the popular life, is inseparable from the maintenance of the Catholic ritual. The reign of taste in the external social life, requires the retention of the varied forms of festal days and intervals of rest, as well as those of working days and times of business, with their various agricultural and commercial arrangements; and the history of mankind shows that genius can only produce its great forms in the open service of the popular life, and that every worthy expression of the fine arts must be expended in the service of religion ‡."

Certainly, in relation to the political advantages resulting from poetry and art, that annual recurrence of festivals, which has so often been the theme of poets, as with Vida and Chiabrera §, might suggest innumerable

* Religios Philosophie, 195.
† Tristan. Tom. V. 21.
‡ Fries, Religios Philosophie, 178.
§ Le Feste dell Anna Christiano.

reflections: for it would be difficult to determine whether, by means of their intrinsic beauty, in general and in detail, they contributed more to the intellectual or to the social cultivation of man. Whoever reflects on the tender and majestic scenes with which they kept the minds of the people familiar, will easily understand why the ages of faith were, in so eminent a degree, ages of poetry, which Novalis calls the heroism of philosophy, and of which philosophy teaches us to know the value. Doubtless we must ascribe much of the sublimity and purity which distinguished the European imagination, to the influence of the solemn daily ritual, to that essence of ideality and of supernatural joy, which was inhaled with the fragrant incense of the altar. Genius as well as faith was kindled into a common flame, by joining, during Lent, those vast assemblies of believers, in churches whose very stones were each ideas—whose vaults and arches were so many epic poems—who met there by night to hear the solemn rhapsodies of divinely commissioned men, disclosing visions of the threefold world, reminding them of the passion of Christ, the glory of the blessed souls in heavenly paradise, and the dreadful doom of sinners, for ever lost! Who could ever forget the spectacle of this devout multitude, retiring in tears from the portals of the gothic cathedral, under that infant moon, which, in its fulness, was destined to be the solitary witness of the stupendous fact of the resurrection. Truly, genius was not without its share in what was provided by the festivals of the Church, for the beatification of the poor in spirit, for the exaltation of the humble, for the endowment of the meek, for the consolation of mourners. Eternal youth of the soul! poesy that never fades! enchantment equal to that of childhood! Faith gave a sense to the wildest illusions; it explained the most strange creations of the fond imagination. Nothing in them was wholly false. Faith could revive those poor flowers which the world's breath had withered, could make them a second time raise their heads, and diffuse their sweetness in its bosom.

We have already surveyed the beauty of the divine offices in general, as the expression of the hunger and thirst after justice in the human soul; but here, in conclusion, I would invite the reader to view it in relation to the changes introduced by the particular stages of the re-

volving year, and to remark how it even possessed every feature of the genuine poetic character, being universal, and yet peculiar, definite, and yet free, clear, and yet full of mystery: so that the rule of its perfection, like that of mathematics, was in accordance with the principle of unity in variety.

What a divine beauty in this solemn order, which is unchanging, and yet ever new! possessing at the same time the charm of constant renovation and the majesty of eternal repose! What grandeur in its steady, irresistible movement! Paris was still beholding the sanguinary rage of her revolted citizens; an armed throng, with hands and weapons blood-stained, beat against the doors of a church which stands near the scene of the greatest slaughter, demanding the clergy. Behold the venerable pastor, who fearlessly advances! Are they appointed by Heaven, to give him the long-desired and now expected crown? No: they come there only to desire that mass for the souls of the slain should be celebrated on the following day. What a heart was his, what an institution did he represent, which in such a moment preserved its untroubled peace and order! "Men and brethren," he calmly replied, "to-morrow is the Lord's day, on which the rubric forbids me to sing a requiem; but I shall consult the calendar, and fulfil your wishes on the first vacant feria."

Remark too in the ritual to what profound and matchless taste the mere simplicity of faith gave rise. Witness the ghostly eve of All-Hallow Mass! What a moment is that for intellectual impressions in the course of mortal life, when at the end of the joyful vespers in honour of all the saints, after the "Benedicamus Domino," the priest, without moving from his place before the altar, exchanges his golden cope for one of mournful hue, and then, in altered and soul-piercing strains, entones aloud the "Placebo Domino in terrâ viventium," which announces the commencement of that day of universal grief and pity, when the whole world becomes one supplicant for the souls of the dead, that are waiting their deliverance from penal fire.

New thoughts are ever excited by the course divine of the ecclesiastic year. Whether it be the sweet vernal season, which yieldeth joy to all breasts, or the time when leaves are fallen, and churches beaten by the raging

winds, he who loves the sacred offices, continues still as one in whom desire is wakened, and whom the hope of somewhat new to come fills with delight. Short space ensues between the holy triumphs of the host of Christ. At one time it is the "Veni, Sancte Spiritus" which doth lay open the path that had been yearned for so long betwixt the heaven and earth; at another, it is the "Lauda Sion" which yields a heavenly banquet to the raptured soul. Now it is the coming of the Just One which holds in expectance those who hunger and thirst after justice. "Rorate cœli desuper," you hear them sing; "et nubes pluant justum:" soon it will be the sacred orison on the presentation of our Divine Lord in the temple: then prayer, that as those lights enkindled with visible fire dispel nocturnal darkness, so the hearts of the faithful, illumined by invisible fire, that is, the brightness of the Holy Spirit, may be free from the blindness of all vice; that their mental eye being purified, they may perceive those things which are pleasing to God and profitable to their salvation; so that after the dark perils of this world, they may deserve to arrive at never-failing light, through Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

The office for the passion has not been changed since the highest antiquity—so profound was the respect of the Church for the early traditions and ceremonies of faith connected with that awful day!

Here this discourse might well leap like one that meets a sudden interruption to his road: but he who bears in mind that the festivals were dramatic, may pardon if it should extol the high poesy of the sacred strain, and invite him to leave the immortal verse of Sophocles to witness the darksome offices of the holy week. The first sounds, "Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo," or those, "Exultet jam angelica turba cœlorum," which announce the magnificent consecration of the paschal candle, will convince him that he has no loss to fear by the exchange. O gracious virtue! that doth revive, from time to time, the fainting bards of Sion! how is thy might and sweetness felt, when, after a long office, arranged with subtle, profound, but often undiscerned skill, the mystic object of the master minds that composed it is attained—the soul becoming suddenly present at the mournful or glorious event commemorated. The absence of all spiritual refreshment had been endured so

long! and lo now, as if a veil were suddenly withdrawn, men seem to behold every thing described by the sacred penmen, no less than if they really stood at Bethlehem or on Calvary, seem, like Thomas, to have beheld the side and the feet and the hands of Christ, and to have heard, like him, "Noli esse incredulus" from the Divine lips; and feel constrained, through the weakness produced by that intimate sense of the reality, to sink to the earth in adoration—while the rapt crowd sings over them, "Quando Thomas vidit Christum, pedes, manus, latus suum, dixit; tu es Deus meus, alleluja."

The moderns conceive that these testimonies to the admirable beauty of the Catholic ritual are exaggerated. They flock to our churches at all the principal anniversaries; they gaze astounded at the ceremonies of faith; they admit that the music is of the highest order: but their view of all is partial; they can discern no connexion between these things and what is invisible and infinite. They complain that the season is ill chosen, or that the locality is attended with disadvantages. True, the chants, as the walls and towers of the church, may be made an object of scientific curiosity and of philosophical explanation. The church, as Michelet observes *, is a gothic museum, which is visited by men of ability. As they enter irreverently, and look round to praise the beauty of the architecture, so they perform in their brilliant assemblies the most admirable masses of Hadyn and Mozart. What gains their favour, what they like in the church, is not the church itself—not its profound symbolism, which speaks so high—it is the delicate workmanship of its ornaments, the fringe of its mantle, its lace of stone, the difficulty of the execution! How little can these men, who discern nothing but stone and sounds, comprehend a Catholic festival!

During the heroic ages of our history, there would not have been wanting some to remind them of the maxim of chivalrous honour, which pronounces it unjust for those to be at the triumph who had not been at the pain. How should they be now filled? "You see then," says St. Bonaventura, "what joy is here at this paschal feast! Perhaps, however, you have heard, but not felt it, because you had been moved by no pity in the time of the passion.

* Hist. de France, Tom. II. 660.

For if you had known how to compassionate our Lord, then, with a mind not distracted by secular cares or superfluous and curious studies, you would now keep the feast with corresponding sentiments, according to the apostle, who says that, if we were companions in his sufferings, we shall be also partakers of his consolation." How should they experience mystic refreshment, who have never known the blessed thirst? What vigils have these men observed? With what penitential austerities have they purified their intelligence, appeased their passions, sanctified their heart? They have not studied the mournful symbols of Lent; and now that the veils are withdrawn, altars again decorated, and full choirs, in a circling melody, are taking up the hymns of angels, unseen, unfelt, unheard, will pass before them the figuring of Paradise.

O festival of the Resurrection! how dost thou imparadise the soul, drawing the veil from off our present life, and disclosing visions of eternal bliss to the eyes of poor mortality! Whatever melody sounds sweetest here, might seem a grating to fatigue the spirit, compared unto the sounding of those bells of Easter morn which awaken the assurance of resurrection in the heart of man! This is the day of hope, the feast of angelic love, and of that friendship which unites in sweetest bonds of fraternal affection the wayfarers of human course.

I did note once a youthful pair, fellow students in the same city, who loved, from time to time, to consecrate together these sacred days to religion, happy when they could withdraw from the crowd, to meditate on the past and future.

Christian friendship improved upon the counsel of Alceus. It said not

> "Σύν μοι πῖνε, συνήβα, συνέρα, συστεφανηφόρει,
> Σύν μοι μαινομενῳ μαίνεο, σὺν σώφρονι σωφρόνει."

But rather. "Follow me to the altar of God, and pray with me; to the tribunal of penance, and confess with me; to the great sanctuary, where rejoicing spirits stand amazed at Heaven's mercy, and receive with me the Lord of life."

What a charm was there in thus preparing together for the struggle of the earthly existence, when both had

the same passions to combat, the same dangers to traverse, the same Master to serve with faithful zeal! These young friends felt it; and during the exercises of the long penitential season, closed by the Holy Week, they loved to concentrate themselves in a common sadness, that afterwards, when the days of immortal triumph should arrive, they might lay themselves open to the same joy. So together did they repair to the churches, to adore the cross; together, to hear the chants of prophecy; together, to meditate, and to sing the Miserere and Vexila Regis, before the veiled image of the Saviour. This affliction had a taste as sweet as any cordial comfort; for during these affecting solemnities, they felt the truth of that devout sentence of Thomas à Kempis, that "it is sweeter to be with Jesus on the cross, than without him in Paradise." How deeply did they understand, and with what love did they contemplate, all the mighty and the tender things concealed under the beautiful Catholic forms! And when the priest, holding the crucifix in his hands, said, with tears, "Christians, behold it, that cross which you adore, the sole treasure and comfort of the unhappy upon earth! Christians, remember Calvary! 'Ibi crucifixerunt eum.' Shudder at the thought of there being a spot on earth where the Creator has been crucified by his creatures. Tremble, lest this terrible inscription should be for yourselves also: 'Here they crucified him.'" Yes, these young friends understood and felt the words of the priest, for they, too, had been unhappy, and the charity of Christ had urged them to works of mercy; and, when evening came, they used to remain longer on their knees before the cross in silence.

Now the aspect of all things bears testimony of the Passion. After the mass of Maundy Thursday, every sound of earthly occupation and pleasure ceases: no bell, no music, breaks the solemn stillness of the mourning city. In Spain, no carriage is allowed to appear in the streets; the king and court, with the meanest subject, going to the stations on foot. "I have seen," says De Bourgueville, "before the change of religion, the devotion of the people of Caen to be so great and fervent, that, on the night between the Thursday and Good Friday, both men and women used to go by night, barefoot, to all the churches, to adore our Lord under the sacramental species, and give their alms to a multitude

of poor at the doors of the churches *." This affecting devotion was encouraged also by the indulgences which the Church attached to its observance. It is still a practice observed in France to pass the night within the tomb, in adoration of the sacramental presence there. During the day, the streets of cities wonder at the unaccustomed spectacle of holy recluses and devout women, in the habits of their respective orders, who, throughout the whole year, are never seen beyond their cloisters, excepting on this occasion. At Genoa, twenty-one confraternities of devout laics proceed in procession, after vespers, to the sepulchre of the metropolitan church, carrying lighted tapers, crosses, and various mystic emblems curiously wrought †.

These two friends repair now, in the dusk of evening, to the sepulchre, to chant the Stabat Mater with the tribe of holy mourners, who make the solemn vaults resound with a melody most sweet and sad. Why did Bernardin de St. Pierre feel himself so profoundly moved on these occasions, by seeing a young peasant maiden leave her companions, and, when every one was at a distance, kneel down, and, with joined hands and eyes raised to heaven, make her prayer, and then put her piece of money into the plate which was at the foot of Calvary? What is it, in sanctity, which moves us, and why does the view of it make the tears gush from our eyes? I know not. Philosophy can teach nothing here: love alone comprehends what is mystic in the details of love; and man, when not depraved, is a being of religious love. Here sing those saintly sisters of Christ's family, whose countenances have so often enabled painters of old to impart to their female heads that more than ideal sweetness which we behold in those of Benozzo on the walls of the Campo Santa at Pisa. Here they raise the sympathizing strain, which condoles with the blessed Mary, till suddenly their tears choke the words,—

> ——————— " Like to the lark,
> That, warbling in the air, expatiates long,
> Then, trilling out his last sweet melody,
> Drops satiate with the sweetness ‡."

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* Les Recherches et Antiquitéz de la Ville de Caen.

† Italia Sacra, V. 834.

‡ Dante, Parad. XX.

This dropping off, through pity, of the sweetest and most heavenly voices, while the solemn procession moves on through the crowd, has an overpowering effect. It indicates that the souls, of which these were only the expression, have been dissolved by the words of that divine hymn. I used to discover these affectionate persons bowed down, with faces in the dust, whose hearts, too full for music to give them relief, found it now in the secret flow of delicious tears; and there, too, oft have I been one of many who could not, to the end, endure the harmony of that unearthly strain.

The profound and intense feeling with which the laity of the middle ages entered into the spirit of the Church during the commemoration of the Passion may be witnessed in many remarkable episodes of history. In the year 1203, after the defeat of John de Courcy, at Downpatrick, by Sir Hugh de Lacy, that nobleman offered the single combat, which the latter declined accepting, at the same time promising a large reward for his person, alive or dead. This offer proving ineffectual, he, in the next place, practised secretly with some of the followers of de Courcy, who were prevailed upon by bribes to betray their master. Having chosen their opportunity when he was doing penance near the church of Downpatrick on Good Friday, on which day, yearly, say the annals, he wore no arms, but was wholly given to divine contemplation, and used to walk, all solitary, round that churchyard, they rushed upon him, killed some of his retinue, amongst them two sons of Armoric de St. Laurence, who attempted to defend their uncle. De Courcy, however, with his usual prowess, seizing a wooden cross which stood in the church-yard, maintained an obstinate contest. He was at length, however, overpowered, bound, led captive beyond the seas, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment in the Tower of London.

But the day of the resurrection approaches: it is already anticipated in the office of Holy Saturday. Since yesterday, there is a change: there is an expectation of some mighty joy. The walls are no longer hung with weeds of mourning: the beauty of painting, the splendour of marbles, the lustre of illumined gold, again involve men in the strife of vision. It is no longer the Miserere and the Stabat: it is a prayer that we may so be inflamed with heavenly desires through this Paschal so-

lemnity, that we may be able to arrive with pure minds at the festival of perpetual light. Forms of hope and victory are beheld; the emotions are too powerful for words: the only language is symbolic. The light of Christ is raised, and thrice the prostrate crowd adores. At length the church breaks forth in the extatic cry, "Let the angelic choir of heaven now rejoice: let the divine mysteries rejoice; and let the trumpet of salvation sound for the victory of so great a King. Let the earth, also, rejoice, illumined with such splendour, and enlightened with the brightness of the eternal King. Let, also, our mother, the Church, be glad, adorned with the brightness of so great a light; and may the temple resound with the loud voices of the people. Wherefore, I beseech you, most dear brethren, who are here present at the wonderful brightness of this holy light, to invoke with me the mercy of Almighty God."

What tongue can express the admirable beauty of the office on this great day? What humility may not be learned in the mighty triumph, when he to whom the benediction of the Paschal candle is assigned, pronounces himself at that moment unworthy to be a Levite? With what profound and tranquil joy does the soul of man hear those celebrated and wondrous words, "O certe necessarium! O felix culpa!"

Hitherto the harmony has been alone of voices; but now comes forth the majestic priest, vested in gorgeous chasuble, with solemn company, to sing the mass of this triumphant night. Now again rises to the highest vault the fragrant cloud, through which pierces the tremulous lustre of innumerable tapers. All is adoration, holy rapture; and yet still there is an expectation, for the choir has not resumed its office. But the moment is come, the moment so long desired, of announcing the accomplishment of human redemption and the fulness of heavenly joy. Inflamed with a seraphic ardour of spirit, the priest, with outstretched arms, entones the Gloria in Excelsis, and then earth and heaven seem united: the bells are rung; they murmur in the lofty towers; the roar of distant cannon answers them; while within the church, the majestic swell of organs and the burst of the long silent choir seem to dissolve innumerable souls in the ecstasy of heaven. As Dante says of that loud hosanna which was sung in Paradise, "it is such a

sound as must leave desire, ne'er after extinct in human breasts, to hear renew'd the strain *."

But now the church, having sung her treble alleluja, hastens to dismiss her children, that they may prepare themselves for the ensuing day. She briefly salutes the Virgin Mother, and sings "Regina cœli lætare alleluja." Nothing can better express the feelings of every faithful heart, than those broken artless lines, where each word is joy and love, terminating with the same "allelujah," indicating by their simplicity the overflowing of gratitude.

With many, the happiest moment of life seemed to be that when the priest sung on this day the "Ite missa est, allelujah, allelujah." Leaving the church, each one returned to his home through thronged streets, with swelling bosom, and eyes diffused in tears, and looks that showed the hope of life eternal on his mind imprinted; and with a heart so moved by vehement affection, that he would gladly enfold within his arms every stranger that passed by, as the prisoner embraceth his fellow captives when tidings are brought of their approaching deliverance. These emotions, which every one feels within himself, were permitted formerly to have actually a corresponding expression, as Leo Allatius witnesseth:—"When all who are in the church," saith he, "have followed the example of the priests, and have mutually embraced with devout kisses, the same manifestations of spiritual affection are exchanged even without the church. During the three days of the Resurrection, and even longer, all persons embrace each other on meeting: the men embrace men; the women, women; boys only observe no order, but, with tumultuous joy, give and receive a thousand kisses. And thus the whole Christian people, laying aside hatred, and reconciled with a kiss, is united together in one bond of love †."

During that night, in the third century, the streets of cities were illuminated, so as to be as lightsome as in the day: torches and lamps cast their beams in every spot ‡. St. Gregory Nazianzen speaks in rapture of the beauty of this mystic rejoicing §. Nevertheless, whether it be in consequence of the suspension which at present

* VIII. † De Hebdom. et Domin. Græc. c. 22.
‡ Euseb. Vita Constant. IV. 22. § Serm. XLII.

takes place from the office having been forestalled, or from some general principle of our spiritual life, certain it is that the soul, during the intervening hours, seems to experience a strange interior struggle, as if it were uneasy at the prospect of being fully consoled on earth.

It was so sweet a thing to mourn at the foot of the cross of Christ! Who would not have stood for ever there, and forgotten his own hopes of a resurrection, to have wept with Mary, and to have gazed for ever upon that amazing spectacle of woe and pity? The world, in which this enormous act was perpetrated, is not the proper place for gladness: in heaven, joy is associated with perfection; here, it seems to be, at the best, a doubtful emotion, and rather a thing of guilt and shame. Therefore it is that the Church tempers her sweet with bitterness; for even this most triumphant festival breathes a mystic joy mixed with abundant sorrow. The eyes are hardly dry with which we contemplated the spectacle of the cross, and the strains of the Stabat Mater still seem to rise around us, when we are invited to sing allelujah with rejoicing souls. Great is the glory of the mighty triumph, but the countenance continues pale, the cheeks are still stained with the tears which flowed at the sad sight; and with a kind of inexplicable, strange desire, the heart still seems to cling to the office of a mourner. We find it recorded in history, that these feelings were experienced by the men of the middle ages:—"I used to minister to him when he celebrated the divine mysteries," says an ancient writer, describing the character of Lucas, elected Archbishop of Cosenza, in Calabria, in the year 1204; "I heard him say once," he continues, "that he never felt lighter throughout the whole year, than during the fifteen days of the Passion; so that he used always to grieve when they were finished *."

But the day of the Resurrection is come: the silence of the first dawn is broken by the toll of solemn bells; crowds already throng the streets; there is a solemn procession to the tomb; the churches can hardly contain the faithful. Christ is risen indeed, and has appeared to his disciples.

The church now displays all the treasures of rare and beauteous kind with which the piety of the people has

* Italia Sacra, Tom. IX. 206.

adorned her. Thus Paul, the deacon, mentions that the holy Bishop Masma, in his church at Merida, ordered the most precious vestments of gold and silk cloth to be used in the Easter festivals. As through streams of sunlight is seen a flower-besprinkled meadow, so now on every side we see bright fair forms, legions of splendours, on whom burning rays shed lightnings. It is the day of saintly pomp, expressive of the deep things which are below, from mortal eye so hidden, that they have in belief alone their evidence. O ye, in blissful fellowship admitted to the supper of the blessed Lamb, to drink of the fount whence flows what most ye crave! lo, it is the great day of the adorable Eucharist. Let other men beware and tremble, who have not that credence on which is founded every virtue. Say, inconsistent utterers of current coin, who would be Christians without faith, who will not confess your Saviour present in the sacramental elements, because you have not demonstration physical, would you have acknowledged your God during the late days in the person of a poor crucified carpenter, bleeding on an ignominious cross, saturated with opprobrious insults? See, then, to what a distance your unribbed bark is driven, if once you hoist a sail before this fatal blast, which has scattered so many before you over the immeasurable ocean of evil, there to perish unseen for ever!

And now where shall I find words to speak of the assembly of disciples to commemorate, after twelve or eighteen centuries, this stupendous and adorable mystery of a dead God risen! O what mortal tongue can describe such a festival! It is unlike any thing else that mortal eye beholds: it is a symbol, it is an anticipation of heaven; for it leaves nothing present to the mind but the fulfilment of all justice and the reign of everlasting peace. To which ever side you turn, you behold some image of Paradise, some victorious trophy won from death, some proof of things not seen; every where you behold devout people, hastening to assist at the solemnity: all is movement and reunion. In all other places, to a philosophic eye, a crowd of human beings is associated with mournful or fearful reflections: its presence brings fatigue, disgust, or terror. Here, it is felt as a benediction: it brings refreshment, delight, and courage. Some persons may be discerned in meditative mood,

leaning over the galleries along the upper walls of the temple, listening to the mighty sound, like the distant murmur of the sea, which rises to them from the mere tread of the multitude below, and apparently indulging in the deep and soothing reflections which it is so capable of inspiring. In short, whatever is seen or heard is cheering and ravishing: the place itself is full blessed; it would be well to drop dead in it. As the Church herself sings, this place is made by God, an inestimable sacrament, irreprehensible. Here the crimes and follies of the race of men are forgotten; here the countless sorrows of human life end. It is a place alike for mourners and for those who rejoice. Prophecy is seen accomplished here. All the families of the nations are adoring in the sight of God. All these old men, all these young men, all these mothers, these maidens, these children, who, from the bottom of their souls, have poured out so many tears for the sufferings of Christ: behold them now to-day consoled, consoled with abundance of bliss, filled with mystical vows and joy. It is as if what blessed John beheld in vision had now been accomplished upon earth: it is as if God himself had wiped away all tears from the eyes of men; as if there was no more death, nor grief, neither lamentation nor sorrow any longer, from the former things having passed away at the voice of him who sitteth upon the throne, saying, "Behold, I make all things new."

And the two young friends went together, at the voice of their sweet and precious guide, to be refreshed with these sacred dews. All within was purified and calm: no idea of the world to obscure the bright lustre of their holy thoughts,—the past atoned for, and the future in the pledge of mercy sure. Then did they pray fervently and long for each other: they prayed also for their families, for all their brethren in Jesus Christ, and, above all, for such as were not given to God, whose understanding had a thirst for truth, and had not been refreshed,—whose hearts had a craving for justice and happiness, and had remained empty.

How beautiful and how holy must have been that union of two young men, supplicating, to aid their intelligence, the Divine intelligence, to enable them to resist the corrupting torrent of the evil days on which their lot had cast them, and aspiring with all their souls to the

Divine love, that they might be instrumental in communicating it to others! Admirable power of religion in friendship! sublime sanctification of friendship by religion! Wondrous mystery of the Eucharistic union! To yield angelic love in breasts of flesh and blood, and hope immortal in creatures doomed irreprievably to die!

It is evening, and vespers are now with exultation sung. Some writers have expressed surprise that there should be no hymn for Easter; but methinks in this very omission one must feel that there is something in accordance with the astonishment which such a mystery creates in human breasts. Yet not without soul-inspiring strains breathing the love of angels, does the Church leave the faithful audiences on the evening of this great day, and on those which succeed it through the octave; for at the benediction, when golden altars, resplendant as the sun, fire the highest vaults of the temple, the "O filii et filiæ" is chanted from above, as if by an angelic chorus, making heaven and earth copartners in its joy.

No, I should never finish, were I to describe the festivals of the Church in all the mystic grandeur and pathetic tenderness of their detail, or were I to express all the indications of profound thought and of ecstatic rapture with which they were received and celebrated in the ages of faith. If a feeling of regret at the shortness of the earthly course were ever admissible to a Christian, methinks it might arise from a wish to have celebrated oftener these great festivals, to have meditated oftener on these stupendous mysteries, ere death his fated term should prescribe, and faith be changed into possession. Life is clearly too brief to enable us to enjoy the thousandth part of the sublime and rapturous emotions which they are capable of yielding to our nature. But these are themes for men, who are of angels taught, of heaven inspired with gifts of the highest muse, and, as one of ancient fame hath said, in circumstances similar, "for me, sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing amongst many readers of no empyreal conceit," to attempt to develope them is presumptuous and vain.

Durandus wrote his austere complaints on the insensibility of men to the sublime symbolism of the Catholic Church in the thirteenth century, in the age when Christian art shone with so much splendour, when an

enthusiastic and spiritualized society pushed forward with all its efforts towards a marvellous ideal, and sought to escape from the realities of terror, by symbolizing life. Oh, if he had lived in later times, no one would accuse him of rigorism, and of having merited the satiric epitaph composed for him by his enemies,—

"Durus Durandus jacet hoc sub marmore duro."

Justly would he have wept on beholding ages of prosaic dulness, of reactions full of hatred, and of avaricious industry, when men had lost the sense of religious art, and had grown to regard the temples of their fathers and the ceremonies of faith as the hieroglyphic traces of a former world. These rites and commemorations were instituted, as the sacred Scriptures were written *, that men might believe; and now that the inference of Duns Scotus is rejected †, and theology reduced to bare action, resting upon no philosophy of life; when men, loving vanity and seeking after lies, desire rather that they may not believe, and that a pompous affectation of virtue should uphold the civilization which is to exclude the manners of Catholic ages, we need only conclude that the boasted progress of society, whatever their most subtle doctor may affirm in its praise, is in truth nothing more than a verification of the sentence of St. Augustin, "Omnis creatura mutabilis, solus Deus immutabilis ‡."

CHAPTER IX.

Such, then, is the evidence furnished by the institution and observance of the Catholic rites and festivals, and by the whole history of the Roman Liturgy. Thus was the mystic society which had been diffused over the world

* Joan. XX.
† In Lib. Sentent. Prolog. IX. 4.
‡ De Trinit. VI. 6.

impelled by a secret and insatiable thirst to seek, in the symbolic representation and commemoration of things invisible, a more perfect union with justice than could be obtained by an application to the realities of the present external nature. Incidentally, it is true, we have been led, during the investigation, to witness many proofs of the piety of the middle ages; but we should hardly have a full conception of the prevalence and intensity of the blessed thirst, if we were not to direct our attention expressly in conclusion to this point, in order to observe what a general spirit of devotion existed during this long period of the history of man.

Every act of pure morality, and every thought of true greatness,—whatever can serve the necessities or exalt the dignity of human nature,—all that excites the genius of the artist, or impels the poet to develope the ideal forms of his imagination in harmonious words,—must arise from that secret thirst after justice, which, from being inherent in the soul of man, is augmented, directed, and finally satisfied by grace. "All our inclinations," says Novalis, "appear to be nothing but religion in some sense or other. The heart seems as if it were the religious organ. Perhaps the highest produce of the productive heart is nothing but heaven *." Morality, even in the sense of natural reason, as expressed by the ancient philosophers, recognizes the supreme pre-eminence of devotion above every other obligation. Cicero sums up the duties of man in this order: the first being what he owes to the gods; the second, what are required by his country; and the third, what he must fulfil towards his parents †. It is needless to remark that the Christian philosophy places piety in the van, since it declares that from that source every meritorious action must take rise; but what I have engaged to show in this place is the conformity between this axiom and the manners of society during the middle ages, which, when viewed in this particular point of view, will appear more than ever justly entitled to the designation of "Ages of Faith." The proposition cannot be better stated than in the words used by a modern author, in other respects of no great weight, but which will answer our immediate purpose sufficiently well, since, in the eyes of his contemporaries,

* Schriften, II. 306. † De Officiis, Lib. I. 45.

of whose opinions he is the steady advocate, they must possess the merit of unquestionable impartiality:—"The middle ages," saith he, "were more distinguished by a religious character than any other period of which the history of the world makes mention; and this feature, which belonged to society in general, was the property of almost all its individual members, imbuing the light love-strain of the minstrel with its deeper pathos, giving a soft and solemn beauty to many of the customs of domestic intercourse, and blending the soldier's dream of glory with one of immortality and heaven." So far this writer, speaking as to the general fact, which, however, is better stated in the following words, by a French historian:—"In the abyss of the Passion lies the thought of the middle age. This age is wholly contained in Christianity, as is Christianity in the Passion. Literature, art, the different developments of the human mind from the third to the fifteenth century,—all is suspended on this eternal mystery *."

We may remark here, in confirmation of the literal truth of this statement, that it was not merely on the sixth feria of the great week that the faithful people of the middle ages commemorated the mysterious day on which man was made and redeemed: throughout the whole year, it was observed as a day of abstinence and retirement, and in many places there were ceremonies and other usages expressly instituted in memory of our Lord's passion. Ferdinand de Bazan ordained that, on every Friday, in order to remind the people of the death of the Saviour, at the sixth and ninth hour, the bells of the churches of Palermo should toll with a lugubrious sound †: and in the bishopric of Ratisbon, as also in many other dioceses, the great bells were similarly tolled at nones, on Friday; on hearing which, the prayer, "Respice in me Deus," or the psalm, "Deus, Deus meus, respice in me," or some other supplication, was repeated by every tongue, and indulgences were attached to this devotion. In Milan, there were no fewer than nineteen confraternities of laymen, under the title of the Holy Cross, whose especial object was to erect and repair, throughout the province, monuments that would con-

* Michelet, Hist. de France, I. 637.
† Sicilia Sacra, Not. I. 262.

stantly recall to the minds of the people the cross and passion of their Redeemer *.

Man, in Paradise, fell from innocence through the temptation of a foreign enemy; and, on earth, he falls from grace through the influence of his brethren. Like one individual, society itself experiences these awful moral vicissitudes: it falls like one man, generally, by a gradual and imperceptible progress of degradation. "For," says St. Odo, in his Collations, "as we do not perceive in what manner the beauty of the body changes in old age, so, also, our mind, we being unaware, frequently is bent from the state of rectitude and from the form of religion, unconsciously grows old, and decays according to the words, 'Traxerunt me, et non sensi†.'" Indifference to religion, in its progress through society, advances like the hand of a clock, "Quam progredi non videmus, progressam autem videmus."

Could the men of former ages be permitted again to visit the regions in which they had once thought that faith had taken imperishable root, great would be their astonishment! They would hear, indeed, on all sides, even from those whose cheeks were not yet clothed with down, much boast of reformation and morality, renovated light, and evangelic lore; but what likeness would they find to that grain of mustard-seed, which a man sowed in his garden, which increased and became a great tree, so that the fowls of the air lodged in its branches? Or what similitude to that leaven, "which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened ‡?"

One of the first characteristics of the religious fervour of the middle ages which presents itself in history, is its universality: devotion not being confined to any particular order or condition of men. Sanctity was not confined to cloisters, or to the chair of St. Peter: it was found in the walks of secular life, and upon worldly thrones. The words of Isaiah were literally accomplished in the middle ages, "The nations walked in his light, and kings in the splendour of his rising §." These mighty waters, which now, like a savage torrent, precipitate themselves in

* Italia Sacra, IV. 27.

† St. Odonis, Collat. Lib. I. Bibliothec. Cluniac.

‡ Luke xiii. 19. § lx. 3.

straight lines against the Church, leaving nothing standing but what is absolutely part of the very Rock which can never be overthrown,—in those days flowed gently, and in a varied undulating course through the divine garden, refreshing its tender plants, fertilizing and covering with flowers of ten thousand lovely hues all the adjacent soil. "True," as St. Clement said, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, "the laity had particular duties different from those of priests;" but during those ages, if a person in the ranks of secular society were studious and thoughtful, fond of retirement, walking not in the trodden paths, but looking to the divine mysteries and to the ceremonies of faith as the true medicine for sorrow, it was not concluded that he was forsaking the post which Providence had assigned to him, or introducing confusion into the social hierarchy; for that nice discrimination of offices which our modern civilization has sanctioned, where it was not unknown to our ancestors, was expressly condemned by them, as in contradiction to the spirit and letter of the Christian law, which declares that without holiness no man should ever see God. In the laity, therefore, as well as in the ecclesiastical order, sanctity was the first duty and the highest honour of every one who professed himself a disciple in the school of Christ.

"No!" exclaims St. Jerome, "it is not ecclesiastical dignity which makes the true Christian. The centurion, Cornelius, though a pagan, was purified by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Daniel, while a child, was the judge of old men. Amos, from the bosom of poverty and ignorance, was raised to be a prophet of the Lord. And David was sought for among shepherds, when he was to be established King of Israel. It was the youngest, the last of the disciples, who obtained the greatest marks of the love of his Divine Master *."

St. Anselm, while a monk at Bec, in a letter of advice to his friends, Odo and Lanzo, reminds them of the words of truth, that but few are chosen; and adds, with solemn eloquence, "Quapropter, quicunque nondum vivit ut pauci, aut vitam suam corrigendo inter paucos se colligat, aut cum certitudine reprobationem timeat †."

We find the ancient monk of Ratisbon, whose account

* S. Hieronym. Epist. ad Heliodor. † Epist. Lib. I. 2.

of his temptations, various fortunes, and writings, has been published by Mabillon, speaking of his having edited a book entitled "A Manual written for the Admonition of Clerks and Laics *."

Alcuin, in his book "De Virtutibus et Vitiis," which is addressed to Count Guy, after reminding that nobleman of the care required for his salvation, speaks to him as follows:—"And be not alarmed by the habit of a laic which you wear, or by the secular life which you lead, as if under this habit you could not penetrate through the gates of celestial life. For as the blessedness of the kingdom of God is preached to all without distinction, so the entrance to this kingdom is open equally, according to the degree of merits, to every sex, age, and person. There it is not distinguished who on the earth has been a laic or a clerk, rich or poor, young or old, master or slave; but the eternal glory crowns every man according to his works." Iona, in his celebrated book, "De Institutione Laïcale," written in the ninth century, and printed by Dacherius from a manuscript 500 years old, which he found in the Abbey of Corby, shows that the law of Christ is to be observed, not especially by clerks, but generally by all the faithful †.

The Abbot Smaragdus, in his work entitled "Via Regia" addressed to the Emperor Louis le Debonnaire; and Gilles de Rome, in his "Mirror of Chivalry for the Instruction of Princes," argues on the same ground, desiring them to remember death and judgment ‡. What a heavenly air breathes through all the Laical Institution, which was written during the reign of Charles the Bald! Here is proof that it was not dry, cold morality which used to be addressed to the secular society of the middle ages! "It must be our care, then," says Iona, "that nothing of the corruption of the old man may remain in us. Christ, not in part is crucified, but wholly, that we should die to all sin and live to God. But he lives to God who follows the footsteps of Christ in humility, sanctification, and piety: he, I say, lives to God and is made his temple, who is clothed with these celestial precepts which form the raiment of the new man, which he shall want who

* Vet. Analecta, 118.
† Lib. I. cap. 20. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. I.
‡ Mir. Lib. III. c. 18. 48.

with a stained robe shall repair to the nuptial feast. If, therefore, as the blessed Jerome saith, any one shall be found in the day of judgment under the name of a Christian, not having the wedding garment, that is, the robe of the celestial man, but a stained robe, that is, the garment of the old man, he will be immediately addressed in these words, "Amice quomodo huc intrasti?" and he will be speechless. In that time there will be no place for penance, nor power of denial, when all the angels, and the world itself, shall be witness of sins. Therefore every one of the faithful should know, that unless he be clothed with this new man, namely, with our Lord Jesus Christ, though at present he may walk in purple and fine linen, adorned with gold and gems, yet will he appear miserably and tearfully naked in the eyes of the Divine Majesty. And if he should depart in this nakedness, not only will he be reproved by Christ the King, hereafter, but also he will be excluded for ever from the marriage feast. Now if any one desire to know what is the raiment of this new man, let him know that it consists in innocence, patience, benignity, gentleness, faith, humility, charity, modesty, chastity, without which, no man shall see God*."

During the middle ages, the laity, whatever may have been the excesses into which they were occasionally betrayed, can never be said to have borne any resemblance to that stony people, from which, according to Pindar †, their name had been originally derived. They were far from being that durum genus which Deucalion and Pyrrha produced ‡: or, as Pindar styles it, λίθινον γονὸν, that race of stones.

The eulogium, "Laïcus sed religiosus," which is bestowed on the brother of Valentinian, in the chronicles of Monte Casino, indicates no character that was uncommon in the world §. The popular race had now been softened and moulded by the power of that religion, which appeared equally divine and miraculous to the shepherds of Judea in the stable of Bethlehem, to the empress of

* Jonæ Aurelianensis Episcop. de Institutione Laïcale, Lib. I. cap. 2, apud Dacher. Spicileg. I.

† Olym. IX.

‡ Virg. Georg. I. 63.

§ Chronic. Casinensis. cap. 13.

Rome in the catacombs, and to the chiefs of the barbarians under the forests of Germany.

The author of the book entitled on the Use of Romances, objects to history, on the ground that its characters are always equivocal. But his argument does not hold with respect to the indications which it exhibits in the laity, during the ages of faith, of the thirst for justice. They now desired to hear that tender petition of the Church in their behalf, when at the paschal solemnities, after praying for her clergy, she adds, "Et devotissimum populum." The heroism and activity, the magnanimous and joyous character of the middle ages, have struck every one conversant with their history; and yet the piety of the laity in those times would now seem fitting only in a cloister.

Nocturnal vigils, sacred lessons at repasts, the observance of three Lents in the year, belonged to the devotion of such princes as Charlemagne, Alfred, Godefroi de Bouillon, Louis VII. of France, and many others.

We read of youths being sent to the royal court, in order to be instructed in divine doctrines and monastic discipline *; of martyrs who had been educated in the scholastic doctrines of our Lord in the hall of the palace †. What greater statesman than Nicholas Acciajoli, the high steward of the King of Naples, who preserved the crown to his sovereign, and in the year 1363, fitted out ships at his own expense, for the service of Florence, his native country? Who more richly endowed with the goods of fortune? He was master of cities and castles both in the kingdom of Naples and in Greece. Yet what was his ruling passion? It was to build churches and monasteries, and to enrich altars. He had a predilection, says Pignotti, for the Carthusian monasteries, having restored that of Naples, and rebuilt that of Florence, the architecture of which, even to the disposition of the cells, being his design. "Perhaps," adds this writer, "his spirit, in the midst of the laborious agitations attendant upon great affairs, turned itself with pleasure to the contemplation of the life of those who had retired from civil tempests into the port of solitude ‡."

* Vitâ S. Laudeb. Ep. Traject. ad Mos. n. 3. 596.
† Acta Martyr. S. Ragnebert. n. 2, p. 619.
‡ II. chap. 6.

Ughelli says, that the munificence of the princes of Beneventum to churches and monasteries was so great, that he fears his statement will not be credited. It equalled that of kings and emperors. They seem to have given their whole principality to the Church *.— But what country ever produced more heroic, more devoted, and magnanimous men, than these pious dukes of the Longobards? Hear the inscription on the tomb of Arichis, Prince of Beneventum, which was composed in the time of Charlemagne :—

"Hic Arichis dormit magni pulcherrima proles
Unica spes patriæ, murus, et arma suis.
Religione patrem, dulcisque parentibus usque
Nullus plus voluit amplius, aut potuit.
Seu Abraham genitor Isaac sic iste peregit:
Oblatus tacuit, jussa parentis agens.
Traditus ob patriæ, populi cunctique salutem
Se opponens voluit pro pietate mori †."

It is curious to remark, that the gravity of the middle ages appears even in the kind of sacerdotal dignity which the writers of that period ascribe to noble manners.— Thus Christine de Pisan says of Louis, duc d'Anjou, brother of King Charles V. "Moult sages homs estoit et avisiez en tous fais, hault et pontifical en maintien ‡." And of Charles, duc de Bourgogne, his third brother, she says, "Prince estoit de souverain sens et bon conseil, doulx estoit et amiable à grans, moyens, et à petis: noble et pontifical en court et estat magnificent §."

Guntchramnus, the best of the Merovingian kings, is described by Fredegaire as being like a priest among priests ||.

Petrus Diaconus relates, that when the Emperor Lothaire came to the monastery of Monte Casino to appease the dissensions which had broken out respecting the election of an abbot, he never ate or drank from the first hour of the day till vespers; "et sub imperiali clamide alterius militiæ tyrocinium ostendebat." "During the whole expedition on which I was with him," says this monk, "he used to hear mass for the dead at the first

* Italia Sacra, VIII. 60.
† Id. VIII. 36.
‡ Part II. c. 11.
§ II. 13.
|| Fredeg. ap. Scr. r. fr. T. II. 414.

dawn, after which he heard mass for his army; and lastly, he heard the mass of the day. While staying in the monastery, he used to go about the cloisters, and all the offices, as if he were abbot or dean, desiring to examine how every one lived under the blessed Benedict. and he used to go barefooted to all its churches. Yet he never absented himself from the company of the bishops, archbishops, and abbots, that he might fulfil what is written, 'Cum sapientibus sermocinatio ejus;" and notwithstanding all his occupations, he was the staff of the blind, the food of the hungry, the hope of the wretched, the comfort of mourners: and he so shone in each virtue, as if besides it he possessed no other*."

Their manner too of expressing themselves, though it would be now felt inconvenient in legislative assemblies, was nevertheless that of men who studied wisdom; like that of Dante, of whom Philip Villani says, "In locutione tardissimus, et qui nunquam inpræmeditate loqui videretur." Lo, how nobly stands, in that romantic fabling which keeps so near to truth, among those worthies of the house of Este, whose figures represented in the shield, caused Rinaldo to wake up from his lethargy, and to cheer his face.—

> "Almerike, first created Lord Marquis of Ferrara,
> Founder of many churches, that upthrew
> His eyes like one that used to contemplate†."

The knights of chivalrous celebrity, in the poems and annals of former ages, are all, more or less, described as men of this character:—"Very early in the morning he rises, and goes to hear mass; then mounts on horseback with his squire, and rides on. After mid-day 'il entre en une forest moult grande et chevauche longue espace de temps moult pensif‡.'" The ideal, in the poet's mind who drew these portraits, was that of men who thirsted after a higher order of existence, and who would have thanked Heaven, in the words of Chateaubriand, that their life was not built on the earth as solidly as the towers in which they passed their youth.

* Hist. Cassinens. Sæc. VII.
† Jerusalem Delivered, XVII.
‡ Gyren le Courtois. f. 10.

" Est hæc vita brevis, stimulis circumdata sævis
Qui se credit ei, torpet amore Dei."

Such were the lines of the ancient original inscription on the tomb of Count Raynaldo de Avenel, in the cathedral of Catana, who died in the beginning of the twelfth century *.

It might seem vain to multiply examples; but the language of the ancient writers in this respect is so picturesque, that a few might always be proposed in history, without danger of causing fatigue to any reader. Christine de Pisan relates, that King Charles V. of France used to rise at six or seven o'clock, when to his chamberlain and other servants he would always show a joyous countenance. Then after the sign of the cross and his words to God, as being very devout, he used to entertain himself familiarly with them while he was dressed for the day. He used to take pleasure in what was said by the simplest among them. When fully adjusted, his breviary was brought to him, the chaplain being at his side to assist him in saying the canonical hours according to the ordinary of the time. At eight o'clock he went to mass, " laquelle estoit célébrée glorieusement chascun jour à chant mélodieux et solemnel;" then he made a retreat in his oratory, during which time, low masses were continually said before him. At the issue from the chapel, all kinds of people, rich or poor, could speak to him; and he, with the greatest affability, would listen to their requests, and would remit them to his master of the requests. Then he went to the council, and if business did not occupy him, he sat down to table at ten o'clock. While he was at the repast, music was performed before him. On rising from table he received ambassadors and other strangers. After various conversation, which used to last for two hours, he went to take repose during one hour; after which he used to amuse himself with his most private friends, and then he went to vespers; after which he walked in the garden of his hotel of St. Paul, where the queen and other women used to attend him with the children. But in the winter season he used to spend this interval in hearing different fine histories of the holy Scriptures, or of the deeds of the Romans, or

* Sicilia Sacra, I. 528.

the moralities of the philosophers, read aloud, till the hour of supper, which was always early and of a slight nature; after which he took some little diversion, and then retired to rest: and thus in continual order did this wise king pass the course of his life*.

That provision was made in all the private dwellings of the laity for nourishing a spirit of prayer, appears from the fact formerly observed, of the chapel being a constant appendage to the castle. In the decrees collected by Ives de Chartres, we read that "every one of the faithful should have an oratory in his house, in which he may pray, but that mass must not be celebrated there, unless when such a privilege has been specially granted†."

Father Dosithee, in his life of St. John of the Cross, relates, that the doctrines of the Gospel had struck such deep root in the hearts of the inhabitants of Baëce, which is a great city in Spain, that lay persons lived there like ecclesiastics, and ecclesiastics like monks‡.

St. Theresa says, that the two merchants of Medina, who came with her to assist at the first mass in the chapel which St. John of the Cross had arranged in the poor cabin at Durvele, were so moved by what they saw there, that they shed a flood of tears. She adds, that gentlemen of the neighbourhood came to express their obligations to her for having given to that country such a fountain of benediction. Among these men of quality of the neighbourhood who came to Durvele from time to time to converse with St. John of the Cross, was Dom Louis de Toledo, near relative of the Dukes of Alba. This nobleman had five towns under his domain. The two merchants declared, that for all the world they would not have missed seeing what they saw there, so admirable did that poverty appear to these men of riches§.

Examples of this kind must strike all men as very remarkable, if they consider what peculiar obstacles are presented in that rank of life to the influence of ascetic principles. Remark only what passes before you at pre-

* Livre des fais et bonnes meurs du Sage Roy Charles V. chap. 26.

† Decret. Pars III. de Ecclesia, c. 76.

‡ Lib. IV.

§ Vie de S. Jean de la Croix, par le Père Dosithée.

sent. Observe narrowly these poor soldiers, these rough-vested seamen, in the church. Might not one almost take them for monks? Pass on now nearer the altar, and mark those well-dressed citizens, those luxurious sons and daughters of the rich. What would you take them for? I do not ask whether they remind you of monks, or persons devoted to religious perfection, but have they the air of what Bossuet calls Christian severity? Would it not be ridiculous to see them kiss the cross, or perform any act which did not seem required by fashion and habit? Yet this description of persons remember, in the middle ages, possessed the faith and the piety of the poor.

"Pious merchant,"—"nobles et dévotes personnes," was the common style of public acts, even so late as in the sixteenth century* : for to what Shakspeare reckons the king-becoming graces—temperance, lowliness, devotion†—every man of elevated rank formerly was required to lay claim. The title of the Countess Matilda in the archives of Monte Casino, is beautifully expressive of this spirit—"Matilda, dei gratia, si quid est ‡."

"The royal virtues," says St. Isidore, "are two—piety and justice. But piety is more praised in kings, for justice by itself is severe §." It is the remark of a German historian, that the insignia of the kingly state, during the middle ages, were all of sacerdotal origin ||.

This ideal of sanctity in the person of kings was beheld in many whom the Church has not canonized, as Dagobert, Louis-le-Débonnaire, Robert, Louis-le-Jeune, and many whom history but little extols, because they were not powerful as Henry VI. of England, and numerous others of the same type, some of whom, as Cedualla, King of the West Saxons, Cenfed, King of Mercia, Offa and Ina, died at Rome, whither they had gone through devotion.

If such were kingly graces, devotion was deemed no less essential in their ministers. Legislative assemblies were not then opened with military parade, and with manifestation of hostile force, such as is used against a

* Monteil, Hist. des Francais, V. 18.
† Macbeth, IV. 3.
‡ Hist. Cassinens. Præfat. § Etymolog. Lib. IX. 3.
|| Phillips Deutsche Geschichte, I. 434.

besieged fortress. Duchesne says that the members of the Parliament used to be seen going to the palace on their mules, praying to God, saying their hours and chaplets by the way*.

See the rich nobles of Spain contending with the poor who should press nearest to the bier of St. John of God, as it was borne along through the streets of Grenada! The Marquises of Tarifa and of Senalvo, Dom Pedro de Bovadiglia and Don Juan de Guevaro, four of the greatest nobles, thought it a singular favour that they were chosen to carry down his corpse from the room in which he died to the gate of the pavilion, where it was to lie in state.—When this humble man travelled, the greatest nobles used to vie with each other who should lodge him. As soon as he came to Valladolid, Mary de Mendoça, widow of the great commander, Francis de Los Cobos, employed her credit at the court, in order to prevent any one else from being allowed to entertain him, though nothing could prevent him from lodging in the hospital, and where there was no hospital, from preferring the houses of the poor to those of the rich.

Stephen the Wise, Count of Blois, after arriving at the Holy Land, was received with great honours by King Baldwin, who put all his treasures at his disposal. But nobles of these ages were not like our liberal peers; the Count refused every present except that of some relics, which he carried away with great devotion†.

In order to distinguish Thibaud V. Count of Blois, the great Sénéchal, from his father, who was styled "the Saint," the people gave him the epithet of "the Good." There is extant an admirable letter written by this prince on the death of St. Thomas of Canterbury. He remitted to his subjects many of his rights, as is proved by a multitude of titles, and even by an inscription over one of the gates of Blois. His charities to the monks, to churches, and to hospitals, were also great. He gave up all the dues of his sovereignty of Blois to the chapter of St. Saviour during the three days which followed the ascension.

Monstrellet remarks, that Charles, Count of Blois, in the time of Louis XI. lived so holily during the last

* Antiquit. de Paris, I. 142.

† Bérnier, Hist. de Blois.

twenty years of his life, that he may be said to have spent them in fasting, prayer, and alms. He never sat down to table on Friday until he had washed the feet of thirteen poor persons, and served them at dinner with his own hands.

Charles of Blois, Duke of Brittany, in the fourteenth century, was another example of an heroic saint, who lived in the rank of a prince, as much detached from the world as if he had been in a cloister. Jacques de Henchain and Jean l'Argentier, his preceptors, had so well instructed him in the duties of a Christian, that nothing could check his ardour to sanctify his soul while a youth at the court of his father, Guy de Chastillon*. Every day he used to recite the Psalter, the hours of our Lady, and those of the Cross; he used to serve every mass that was said in his father's palace, and assisted the poor in every way that he could. After he was married he continued his course of piety. He showed such respect to priests, that he would always alight from his horse whenever he met one on the country roads. He administered justice and prevented duels. He showed heroic patience in prison and amidst insults, and he closed his saintly life with an heroic death in the field, fighting through the sole desire of fulfilling his duty. This Charles de Blois, on being slain, was quickly despoiled by the varlets; and it was found then that he wore a hair shirt next his skin. A Franciscan brother, named Brother Raoul de Corgaignolles, came to the place, and being a very strong man, took up the body quite naked, and carried it on his shoulders for more than a league; then finding a cart, he placed it therein, and so conveyed it to Guinguant, where it was interred in the Church of the Minor Friars. This Duke Charles had been in eighteen battles during his life; "il fut le plus beau chevalier de France et le mieulx enteichié de vaillance; car de chevalerie faisoit ce qu'il appartenoit a prince. Jolys fut plus que nul aultre, toute sa vie, et de faire chansons et lays s'esbatoit souvent; mais saincte vie menoit secretement et maintient-on que en sa vie nostre seigneur faisoit pour luy maintz miracles†."

Armies seemed to feel a supernatural assistance when

* Bernier, Hist. de Blois, 369.

† Chronique de Du Guesclin. p. 145.

conducted by men of a devout and mystic character. Fernando Antolinez was performing his devotions while Count Garcias was giving battle to the Moors on the banks of the Douro, and the soldiers thought that an angel in his likeness was fighting for him. The same thing is related of the Emperor Ferdinand II. to whom, when at the foot of the altar, they brought standards and trophies, such as the mere valour of his predecessors had never gained *.

Many of the spiritual letters of Father John d'Avilla, the celebrated preacher of Spain, are addressed to great nobles, and knights, and young men living in the world; and from the style in which they are written, one must form a high estimate of the piety of these persons. In fact, to be a Christian in the sense of the middle ages, required the devotion of a whole life to acquire the habits and graces, and even the information requisite: for what is above all striking and singular in their history is, the manner in which the principles of theologians were understood by the mass of the people, rendering so secure from revolution the base of the ecclesiastical and social state. Men were in a strict sense obedient to the intellectual order: they acted not from habit, but from an idea. In these latter days the people seem incapable of reducing to practice any idea of an abstruse and elevated class connected with the spiritual society, even when in theory they admit it. Only consider what a change must be wrought in the intelligence of such a people before they could be brought, like the population of Catholic ages, to venerate the Holy See as the centre of unity,—holy times, in the observance of festivals,—holy ceremonies, discerning their symbolic character,—holy things, obeying the authorities that might oppose their wishes,—holy persons, being full of zeal to serve saints and religious orders for the love of God!

The half-brotherhoods of the Teutonic, Templar, and other orders, as also a number of religious associations and fraternities among the laity, served to extend the spirit of piety, and even the gravity of the cloister, in the world. The three orders of St. Dominick, and that instituted by St. Francis, for people living in the world, were soon spread over Europe, and comprised kings

* Savedra, I. 184.

and queens, princes and princesses, lords, knights, merchants, artisans, and labourers. The rule of the third order of St. Francis must have produced great effects in sanctifying the intercourse of social life. It particularly reminded the brethren and sisters to avoid the vices and follies which cause the misery and ruin of society, to refrain from worldly, vain, and calumnious conversation, to visit and relieve the poor and the sick, to assist them in the hospitals and prisons, and in their houses, to assist the dying, to keep secret the common faults of their neighbours, and to set an example of a pure and holy life, in courts, and camps, and great cities, and castles. By their rule, even persons living in the world were expected to assist at matins, in the churches of their respective parishes, during Lent.

To this order belonged the King St. Louis, St. Elzear, Count of Arian, and his wife, St. Delphine; St. Ives, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Duchess of Thuringia; St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal; St. Brigitte, Princess of Sweden; the blessed Conrad, nobleman of Plaisancia; the blessed Isabella, sister of the King St. Louis; St. Clare of Monte Falco; the Emperor Charles IV. and Elizabeth his wife; the Empress Jane of the Greeks; Bela IV. King of Hungary; Charles II. King of Sicily; Philip III. King of Spain; Blanche of Castille, Queen of France; James de Borgia, King of Jerusalem; Beatrice, Countess of Rusconia; Francis II. Duc de Bretagne; Catherine, Duchess of Milan; Prince Robert Malatesti, Sovereign of Rimini; Prince Henry of Dacia; Isabella, Archduchess of the Netherlands, and sister of Philip III. of Spain; Elizabeth de Bourbon, daughter of Henry IV.; Anne of Austria, wife of Louis XIII.; and Maria Theresa of Austria.

Few cloisters in Rome are more interesting than those of St. Isidore on the Pincian hill, along the walls of which are portraits of the illustrious persons who embraced this third order. There I remarked Brennus, King of Jerusalem; John, King of Armenia; Henry, King of Cyprus; St. Louis, King of France; James, King of Hungary and Sicily; Peter, King of Arragon; St. Elzear and Delphine; St. Elizabeth, Queen of Portugal; St. Elizabeth, daughter of the King of Hungary; James, eldest son of the King of Majorca; and many others.

Moreover, the Church, by granting especial indulgence to those who should perform any one holy exercise observed in any religious order whatever, contributed no less to the same end. The year 1335 was remarkable for the extraordinary devotion connected with these fraternities, which moved the people of Italy and Provence, Spain and England. Processions of five, ten, or even twenty thousand persons, of both sexes, proceeded from city to city. They were enveloped in a white hood, which covered even the face, from which they derived the name of the white companies. They reposed in the cathedrals and public squares, crying out "Peace and mercy," beating themselves with rods of discipline, and chanting sacred hymns, particularly the "Stabat Mater Dolorosa," which was composed about this time. They were fed by the public, although they asked for nothing but bread and water. The pilgrimage lasted generally nine or ten days, after which they returned to their homes. The people of the towns which had been visited, kindled with the same fervour, proceeded in their turn; and thus these devout processions extended from town to town. They first came into Italy by the coast of Genoa. At the sight of these pious pilgrims, the most obdurate hearts were melted; hatreds were forgotten, enemies reconciled, and all became sanctity and peace. The Lucchese, to the number of three thousand, visited Pistoia and Florence. The Pistoians came to the latter city in numbers about four thousand. Of the Florentines, forty thousand put on white; and twenty thousand, with the Bishop of Fiesole at their head, went to Arezzo. These processions spread themselves throughout the whole of Italy.

Devout confraternities of laics, devoted to particular pious exercises and works of charity, existed every where. Of these there were, when Ughelli wrote, no fewer than forty-six in the city of Bologna; thirty-five in Cremona; twenty-four in Genoa; one hundred in Naples; eighteen in Ferrara; twelve in Ravenna; and similarly in other cities, in proportion to the magnitude of the state.

At Venice, where there were upwards of one hundred confraternities, six of these, termed great schools, were celebrated, in which were inscribed an innumerable multitude of laics, having attached to them noble churches, precious sacred vessels and vestments, besides immense

funds, which were yearly expended in pious works, and in charity to the poor*.

Chivalry was another institution of which the clergy took advantage, to infuse a spirit of devotion into the society of the world. To sanctify the profession of arms, which had the sanction of Christ, was an early project. A Latin prayer, of noble simplicity, was composed for the soldiers of the Roman army; and Constantine prescribed that it should be daily repeated.

The high, affecting symbols, with which the institution of chivalry indicated the essential duties of its members, are an evidence of the purest conceptions of a Christian life. Witness that bath of honour, courtesy, and goodness, that bed of repose, to signify the rest of Paradise, which we should conquer by our knighthood; that white robe, to signify the purity which we should preserve if we would arrive at God; that red garment, to signify that we should be always ready to shed our blood to defend the holy Church of God; those sandals of black cloth, to remind us of death, and of the earth in which we shall lie stretched, whence we came, and to which we must return †.

Every part of the knight's armour had its moral signification. The gauntlets, in using which he lifted up his hands on high, were to remind him of prayer to God, and that he was not to be guilty of putting his hand to a false oath. "The ordination of priests," says a modern writer, "to which the admission to knighthood has been frequently compared, could not be accompanied with more solemn exhortations to devotion and purity of mind. Even the desire of glory was not allowed to be a worthy motive for seeking the order of knighthood, unless meekly subjected to the wish of honouring God."

This was the spirit of the military character in Catholic times. It breathes through all the acts of a Tancred, a Roger, a Chandos, a Joinville, a Gonsalva of Cordova, a Don Antonio de Leïva, a Don Fernando of Avalos, Marquis of Pescara, a Don Alonso of Avalos, Marquis of Basto, an Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, an Alfonso of Albuquerque, a Count of Fuentes, a Marquis of Spinola, and numberless others, that we meet with in the old English, French, and Spanish chronicles. The

* Tom. VI. † L'Ordène de Chevalerie.

spirit of St. Paul became the spirit of warlike heroes—for it was the essence of chivalry to glory in the cross of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

True, there may have been something to purge away in the deeds of romantic devotion, which illuminate the page of knightly books. Yet methinks the gravest hermit would only smile at the recollection of Fernando Perez del Pulgar, and of what he performed at the siege of Grenada, when with fifteen companions, between stealth and force, he penetrated in the dead of night into the city, leaving his company to maintain the skirmish with the surprised soldiers at the gate, and galloping through the streets till he reached the principal mosque, where he alighted, and on his knees took possession of it as a Christian Church; in testimony of which act, he nailed to the door, with his dagger, a tablet, which he had brought with him, on which was inscribed, in large letters, "Ave Maria;"—after which he effected his escape through crowds of soldiers, to whom the alarm had been given, rejoined his companions, who were still fighting at the gate, and with them returned in safety to the camp. The mosque, thus boldly sanctified, was eventually, on the capture of Grenada, converted into a cathedral; and in commemoration of this exploit, Fernando del Pulgar enjoyed the right of sepulture in that church, and the privilege of sitting in the choir during high mass. Like many other knights, he was a man of learning as well as a warrior, and inscribed to Charles V. a summary of the achievements of Gonsalvo of Cordova, surnamed the Great Captain, who had been one of his comrades in arms.

As every thing was required to pay tribute to religion, the very titles of the orders of knighthood were connected with the memory of a saint, or of some devout mystery. Witness the Order of the Star, founded by King John of France in the year 1351. The knights, five hundred in number, used to assemble every year at St. Ouen, between Paris and St. Denis, in a castle called the Noble House, on the festival of the Epiphany and on that of the Assumption, at the hour of prime; and they were required to remain there till after vespers the following day. Here there was a hall, sixty feet wide and one hundred and twenty long, flanked with four round towers at each corner, and having a vast chimney,

which was as high as the church steeple. In this hall each knight had his arms painted over his seat. The knights were enjoined to wear the habit, and to fast on Saturdays, also to give fifteen deniers to the poor. On the death of a knight, his ring and decoration were to be sent to the castle, that the rest might pray for him *.

The peculiarly religious character of the middle ages may be witnessed also in the form of those benedictions, the best of natal gifts, as Æschylus would have called them, given to the sons of great men—as that cited by Mabillon, which had been pronounced after the baptism of Lewis, son of the Duke of Angers, in the year 1377. In these formulas, the language is always characteristic of the supernatural views of life with which men's minds were then imbued; and so great was the importance attached to them, that when St. Colomban, the courageous missioner, who reformed kings and people, refused to bless the sons of Theoderic, he was banished from Luxeuil and from Ostrasia, and obliged to take refuge with Clothaire II.†

In the benediction published by Mabillon, God is invoked to bestow his blessing on the child, that as Jacob before his birth was loved without any merits of his own, so he may live guarded by holy angels in the sight of the Lord,—that he may be delivered from all calamities, as was Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans; that in him the Lord God may be praised, and his holy name blessed; that his birth may be useful to the whole world, and to the kingdom of the Franks; that his service may be received as that of Samuel, and that he may have grace to preserve his people in tranquillity; that, like his ancestors, he may be filled with spiritual gifts, and that his age may tend to the exaltation of Christianity; that the Holy Spirit may be vouchsafed to him as to Daniel, that he may know the judgments of God, and that he may fulfil what he knows; that he may be a school of virtues, a master of life, a mirror of modesty, and an example of all Christianity, being grateful in prosperous and patient in adverse fortune; so that, being guarded within and without by the Lord, he may, after a long life and a blessed death, arrive at God his Creator, to

* Lebeuf, III.

† Michelet, Hist. de France, I. 247.

reign with him for ever *.—Such was the γενέθλιον δόσιν of the middle ages.

But to proceed with the characters described in history. Baldwin the Pious, Count of Flanders, was nourished when a boy in the court of the Emperor Henry, and in that palace he was loved by all. In this time of his youth he was seized with so great a sickness, that his father held a candle within his hand, expecting that his spirit would depart—when lo! suddenly his strength reviving, he said aloud, "Father, I shall escape from this sickness if you will give me a place at Hannon, where I may build a monastery." The father was not slow in promising, and his son recovered. Accordingly the monastery was built there in honour of the holy apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul; and from this circumstance, Baldwin of Hannon was called Baldwin the Pious, because he was wholly given up to works of piety—a lover and defender of orphans and widows, of the churches, and of the poor and oppressed. In the church he used always to pay the greatest attention to what was said; and during the Psalmody he would never speak, unless to God. At mass he would always have some poor people near him, to whom he gave alms, that they might pray for him and with him. In time of scarcity he used to be most bountiful, and to cause the monasteries to dispense largely. He was completely devoted to piety, and he used also to be called Baldwin with the nest, and he used to be painted with a bird's nest on his fist, holding it in sign of peace, because, during all his time, Flanders enjoyed peace:—no arms were borne, no troubles endured; the plough was not withdrawn from the land, and scarcely were the doors closed during the night. He died in the year 1070, and was buried in the monastery which he had founded †.

We read of St. Leopold, Marquis of Austria, in the year 1096, and of his wife Agnes, daughter of the Emperor, Henry IV. that they two used to read the holy Scriptures together, and that they founded a monastery and chapter near Vienna, because the care of eighteen children did not allow them sufficient time for the pious exercises that they loved. This saintly prince was also

* Vetera Analecta, 485.

† Chronicon S. Bertini, cap. 38, Pars II. apud Martene Thesaur. Anecdotorum, Tom. III.

an heroic warrior, for he defended his country twice against the invasion of the Hungarians; and he terminated a glorious reign by a holy death in the year 1136.

In fact, many of the princes and nobles of the middle ages were a kind of lay bishops, ever contriving how they might best serve religion and exalt the Catholic Church, the type of which character may be witnessed in that Renaud de Montauban, who carried stones on his back to help in the building of the cathedral of Cologne. The Count de la Motte, writing to the Count de la Tour Maubourg respecting the success which attended the mission of St. Francis Regis, ends his letter with these words:—"In short, I regard this mission as one of the most signal benefits which I have ever received from the liberal hand of God *."

Duke Theodo, in the seventh century, with submissive prayers, besought the blessed Rupert to illuminate Bavaria, by visiting it with sacred doctrine †: and Virgilius, the holy priest from Ireland, who built the great church of St. Rupert at Salzburg, in the eighth century, had another layman, Duke Otilo, for the promoter and protector of his apostolic mission to convert the Bavarians and the natives of Carinthia ‡. What is more remarkable. it was this zeal for religion which mingled with all the thoughts of Columbus:—"He looked upon himself," says his biographer, "as standing in the hand of Heaven, chosen from among men for the accomplishment of its high purpose; he read, as he supposed, his contemplated discovery foretold in Holy Writ, and shadowed forth darkly in the prophecies. The ends of the earth were to be brought together, and all nations, and tongues, and languages united under the banners of the Redeemer."

Proofs of the religious zeal of the middle ages confront us at every step in the walks of our ancient history, as well as in the songs of our old poets: and, indeed, the adversaries of Rome are always willing to attest it. "As for the Papist," says Fuller, speaking of the Catholic gentry of England, "he can as soon not be, as not be active §."

What St. Adelbert said of the King of Denmark, who impeded his efforts to convert the northern nations,

* Vie de S. F. Regis.
† Germania Sacra, Tom. II. 37.
‡ Id. II. 32.
§ Thoughts, 269.

"quibus mens pronior est ad pensiones vectigalium quam ad conversionem gentilium," could never have been applied to the great Catholic princes of those times. The Emperor Ferdinand II. used to say that he would rather renounce his kingdom, than neglect any occasion of extending the faith; that he would prefer being banished, with his wife and children, having no other arms but a staff in his hand, being condemned to live on bread and water, than to suffer any injury to be done to God; and that he prayed to God that, if by his death he could advance the Catholic religion, he might be willing to have his head cut off: and he gave repeated warning to his successor, Ferdinand III., that he should endeavour to defend and preserve the true apostolical Roman and Catholic faith in all his dominions.

"Often have we wished to hold with you a familiar conversation on what concerns the utility of the holy Church of God." It is thus that Charlemagne writes to Odilbert, the archbishop of Milan *: and we find the Archbishop Leidrad writing to the same emperor, in reply to his questions respecting the mysteries of faith †. "I know indeed," says Claudius, Bishop of Tours, to the Emperor Lewis the Pious, "that your serenity is always intent on holy works and on sacred reading, so that I doubt not that you lead a theoretic life under the imperial diadem."

On the death of Pope Gregory VII., when the heretics and schismatics, like wolves, sought to invade the Roman Church, Desiderius, the Abbot of Monte Casino, with the bishops and cardinals, and also, adds Leo of Ostia, "the religious laymen who faithfully persevered in Catholic unity and obedience, began to act unanimously, and to provide for the due ordination of his successor ‡."

Kings regarded it as their glory to co-operate with bishops and holy men in promoting the spiritual welfare of their subjects. Witness the following words, pronounced in the year 742:—"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I, Caroloman, duke and prince of the Francs, with the council of the servants of God and of my nobles, the bishops who are in my kingdom, with the priests, assembled in council and synod for the

* Mabilonii Vetera Analecta, 75. 76. † Id. 85.
‡ Chronic. Casinensis, Lib. III. 65.

fear of Christ, that they might give council to me in what manner the law of God and ecclesiastical religion may be restored, which have been dissipated in the days of the princes my predecessors, and how the Christian people may be brought to the salvation of their souls, and may be prevented from perishing, we ordain as follows." The object of the decree is to preserve the bishops and priests from being molested and impeded in their ministry by military operations.

Still more remarkable was the language of the Capitulary, in the year 823:—"Since it hath pleased Divine Providence to constitute our mediocrity to this office, what we have chiefly to desire above all things, is that, by God's assistance, we may defend the holy Church and its servants, and that peace and justice may be preserved generally amongst all our people."

"Although," says the Emperor Albert, "our soul, amidst various and innumerable cares, is distracted by daily solicitude for the welfare of our subjects, there is one object above all, which engages it: namely, how we can protect the liberties of the venerable churches and ecclesiastical persons; how we may nourish them, either by new donations, or by renovating ancient, according to the circumstances of the time *."

The words of William II., king of Sicily, in a diploma of the year 1157, were as follows:—"Kings and princes of the nations reign justly, if they understand that they are themselves subject to the highest Prince, by whom kings reign and exercise justice; nor do we think that we can in any manner administer rightly the reins of the kingdom committed to us by Heaven, unless we study to magnify and exalt, by all means of religion, the sacrosanct Church, which is the mother of faith †." Again, says this great prince, in another act of the date of 1177, "The chief business of a king is to attend to the interest of the churches, where is placed the foundation of safety and of the Christian faith; neither is there any thing in a prince more glorious than to provide for the augmentation of the things of the Church, and for the maintenance of its inviolable peace, 'quarum cultui deservire nihil est

* Italia Sacra, Tom. IV. 718.
† Sicilia Sacra, I. 97.

aliud quam regnare, et Ecclesias Christi protegere nihil est aliud quam Christum in Ecclesiis venerari*.'"

Hence we may remark that, with respect to the peace and safety of the churches, and indeed of the whole state, it was not in the middle ages as with the fate of those spoken of by Apollo, whose destiny depended upon the absence or presence of one suffrage:—

Γνώμης δ' ἀπούσης πῆμα γίγνεται μέγα.
Βαλοῦσά τ' οἶκον ψῆφος ὤρθωσεν μία†.

The ecclesiastical and social order, with the ideas attached to both,—the Christianity of a state, for which there was no word until after the time of Charlemagne, when that term was introduced‡—rested upon inviolable foundations, upon certain general principles with which all governments were imbued, and which insured them from being left unprotected by the ruling power. Thus Dagobert proclaims that "the royal dignity strengthens the foundation of its structure when it listens to the petitions of priests and pontiffs, and gives them effect in the name of God §. Theoderic observes, that "the royal elevation ought always to provide that whatever had been done contrary to the decree of God or to the institutions of the Fathers, should be annulled ‖." And Charlemagne says, "If we lend a willing ear to the prayers of priests and servants of God, and bear assistance to the discharge of their ministry, this, without doubt, will conduce to strengthen the state of our kingdom, and to the attainment also of the beatitude of eternal life ¶." Childebert speaks to the same effect:—"It becomes the clemency of the prince to obey the just petitions of priests, and to give them effect in God's name **: and if we preserve the works of our Fathers, we trust that our own will have eternal stability." The Emperor Lewis also says,—"If we bestow opportune benefits on those who inhabit places emancipated for the love of God, and set apart for divine worship, we doubt not but that a recompense of eternal remuneration will

* Sicilia Sacra, I. 107. † Æschyl. Eumenid. 750.
‡ Ughelli Ital. Sac. I. 409. § Mabilonii Vet. Analecta, 282.
‖ Id. 277. ¶ Id. 294. ** Id. 283.

be made to us by the Lord * :" and in his diploma to the church of Modena, he says,—" By attending to the petitions of priests and servants of God to the augmentation of the divine worship, we confidently believe that we shall not only add to the stability of our kingdom, but also enable ourselves to attain more easily to eternal rewards †."

In the year 930, King Hugo says, in his donation to Sigifred, bishop of Parma, " We believe that nothing can tend more to the honour of our exalted rank, or to the strength of our government, than our having solicitude for defending the property of the holy churches of God, and our lending pious ears to the vows of the faithful ‡." The Emperor Otho III. holds the same language: —" It behoves us who, by the divine gift, are given preeminence over other men, to obey in all things the precepts of God, to protect the places dedicated to him by the petitions of our faithful people, and to guard them by the imperial favour; since we believe that such actions will conduce both to the prosperous passage of this mortal life, and to our obtaining hereafter eternal felicity §."

In fine, such was the force of this traditionary wisdom, that we find even an Emperor, Henry IV., saying, " As our predecessors, whether kings or emperors, are in this greatly to be praised, that places dedicated to the divine worship were instituted by them with a pious intention, so we believe that we also ourselves shall not be without praise or divine remuneration, if we protect the same ecclesiastical peace, and confirm with solicitude the same primitive liberty ||."

" Whoever looks closely at the history of our France," says Pasquier, " will see that it is not without great reason our kings have borne the title of ' Very Christian,' for each race has just ground to claim it: the first, for having renounced Paganism, in which it was nourished, and for having never degenerated into the Arian heresy, which infected so many of the nations that attacked the empire; the second, for having advocated the popedom

* Mabil. Vet. Analecta, 355. † Italia Sacra, Tom. I. 95
‡ Italia Sacra, I. 156. § Mabilonii Vet. Analecta, 449.
|| Id. 450.

in France; and the third, for its services in the crusades, and in protecting the great and holy orders of religion, which brought infinite fruit to Christianity by their saintly exhortations *."

In a heathen land, the princes and nobles of former times did not confine their speculations to projects of trade or to questions of human vanity; but their curiosity resembled that of Tasso's knight, Ubaldo,—

> " ' But will our gracious God,' the knight reply'd,
> ' That with his blood all sinful men hath bought,
> His Truth for ever and his Gospel hide
> From all these lands, as yet unknown, unsought †.' "

They felt no guilty shame at being thought soldiers of Christ. It is the highest expression of praise with the writers of the middle age to say that a person was " greatly Catholic." The phrase of " ultra Catholic," used in reproach by a modern writer, would have seemed very strange to them. " Querelam Ecclesiæ quilibet Catholicus facit suam," was the maxim of these times, when every man would have thought it an honourable boast to say with Theonæ,

ἐγὼ πέφυκά τ' εὐσεβεῖν καὶ βούλομαι ‡.

Truly. if we consider with Bellarmin how hardly there can be found a more general or less curable disease than human fear, how it rises, grows up, and remains with us till death, how children lie, through fear of confusion or shame, how men perjure themselves, to retain reputation, how it is this fear which makes them refuse to forgive injuries, and renounce luxury and expenses, and profusion §, this deliverance from the fear of man by means of the fear of God, which so remarkably characterized the middle ages, will seem entitled to all our admiration.

Behold the Paladins in Ariosto, when they recognize Rogero,—

* Recherches de la France, Lib. III. 19.
† XV. 39. ‡ Eurip. Helen.
§ De Gemitu Columbæ, Lib. III. 2.

> " All, for they know he is a Christian, stand
> About him with serene and joyful face:
> All press upon the knight; one grasps his hand,
> Another locks him fast in his embrace."

This is the spirit which still animates the Catholic population of Spain and Italy. Wandering through the vineyards in the neighbourhood of Rome, a stranger, whose looks proclaim him to be of English race, will be often questioned respecting the multitude of fervent Catholics in distant Ireland, that lies, he will be reminded, so far beyond the ocean stream.

Zeal for religion was a motive in kings which the laity respected, and in consideration of which they would tolerate much that might have displeased them in the conduct of rival states. At the great assembly of Gisors, in the year 1186, when, on the day of St Agnes, the knights of France and England, under Philippe-Auguste and Henry, received the venerable William of Tyre, who came with bulls from the Pope, and with words of pathetic eloquence, to move them to undertake the deliverance of Jerusalem, the archbishop had no sooner concluded his speech, than a general cry was heard of " The Cross! the Cross!" Henry being the first to throw himself on his knees before the legate, to solicit the pilgrim s sign, the barons of France began to murmur that he should have taken precedence of their sovereign: " Ah, ah," they cried, " the colours of the Plantagenets advanced before those of France!" But they were immediately appeased, when it became manifest that Henry was solely actuated by a zeal for Jesus Christ, and for the help of the holy sepulchre. Strange contrast to the character of their posterity! with whom there needs no other cause of execration against a government, than the fact of its being pure from sacrilege!

The truth is, that the vivacity of faith, from which zeal is inseparable, is attached to those exercises of piety which were so general during the middle ages. As Novalis says, " To pray is in religion, what to think is in philosophy; to pray, is to exercise religion;" and we have already seen how the inducements and facilities to acquire the spirit of prayer were supplied in abundance by the Catholic Church. Moreover we must bear in mind the effect of those numerous minute practices of

devotion recommended by her authority, which were generally observed, in both high and humble life, with a confidence that derived perhaps not a little force from the influence of honour in religion. Tasso, in his letter to the Duke of Ferrara, the original of which may be seen in the library of that city, begins with making a cross. The sign manual of Atenulfus, count of Capua and prince of Beneventum, in the year 903, as also that of Pandolfus and Landulphus, Richard and Jordan, princes of Capua in the eleventh century, which existed in the archives of the monastery of Monte Casino, exhibit a Latin cross at the four extremities, as also along the lines of which are placed the principal letters of the name *. The signature attached to the diploma of the Countess Matilda, in the archives of the monastery of Nonantula, presented the letters of her name grouped in the four angles of a cross †; and the signature of Charlemagne, in his diploma to the church of Beneventum, where it was found by Guicciardini, consists in the seven letters at the points of the cross ‡.

All these customs had been transmitted from the first ages, as appears from Tertullian §, Justin Martyr ‖, St. Chrysostom ¶, and St. Ambrose. "Rising in the morning," says the latter, "we ought to give thanks to Christ for our preservation, and we ought to perform every work of the day with the sign of the Saviour. When you were Gentiles, used you not to seek for signs, and to collect the signs by which things would be prosperous? I do not wish you now to err in numbers, for I know that in the one sign of Christ there is safe prosperity of all things. He who begins to sow with this sign, will reap the fruit of eternal life; he who sets out on a journey with this sign, will arrive in heaven **." Traces, indeed, of a false shame respecting these things, in primitive times, may be discovered in the writings of the Fathers, who condemn it. "Let us not be ashamed," says St. Cyril, "to confess him who was crucified. Let the σφραγὶς be confidently made upon the forehead with the finger." But the complaint of a modern author respect-

* Hist. Cassinens, Sæc. III.
‡ Id. Tom. VIII. 37.
‖ Apolog. I. 82.
** S. Ambrosii, Serm. XLIII.
† Italia Sacra, I. 170.
§ De Coron. Mil. 3.
¶ Op. T. I. p. 571.

ing the shame evinced by his contemporaries in making the sign of the cross when they stand for the "Benedicite" at table, would not have been justified in the days of feudal magnificence and chivalrous refinement. Had these practices no other use besides that of accustoming the mind to confess before men that it professed the humility of the cross, they would have been deemed of inestimable importance by the spiritual thinkers of the middle ages. For when is it, say they, that men are most in danger of denying Christ? It is on small, not great occasions: it is when some one will surprise them with questions. Why such a change? It will be near the fire, in an idle conversation, during a pleasant walk; it will be in the presence of a stranger, or even of their own servant.

Besides, the observance of these minute practices, of which we may say, in the words of St. Jerome, "Non sunt contemnenda quasi parva, sine quibus magna constare non possunt," we find that the laity, during the middle ages, were assiduous in practising all the important exercises of a spiritual life. In the time of Charlemagne, all persons were expected to receive the communion every Sunday, unless especially prevented *. By the canons of the Council of Autun, in the year 670, no layman was to be counted as a Catholic, who did not receive the communion at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, at which three festivals, all had been required to receive it by the Council of Agatha in the year 506. "No one, excepting in case of public penance, neglecting communion on these three festivals, should be considered a Christian," says the Pastoral Epistle of Wulfad Bituricensis †. It was even the custom for the laity to make spiritual retreats before the principal festivals of the Church. Thus we find Romuald, a young nobleman at Ravenna, withdrawing to the neighbouring monastery of Classe, for the sake of penance. Every year, Boniface, Marquis of Tuscany, used to visit the celebrated monastery of Pomposa, and there make solemn confession and penitence for his sins, sometimes publicly submitting to the discipline.

* Thomassinus de Vetere et Novâ Ecclesiæ Disciplin. Pars III. Lib. I. c. 14.

† Mabilonii Vetera Analecta, 102.

In a former book, we had occasion to observe how holy was the spirit that pervaded schools and colleges: but here the mystery of the phenomenon is explained, when we find that paternal towers and domestic hearths were also holy. What is commonly called education is but of little effect, in comparison with the constant and universal action of society. In vain do hypocritical parents separate and isolate children in colleges, or surround them with a sanitary cord, if the air which they themselves breathe is corrupt and unholy; for their children must necessarily breathe it too, when they come into contact with society. Among the laity of the middle ages, it was common to meet with men, like the noble Hilary of Aquitaine, when in the married state, endowed with the graces of a profound religious spirit. The Chronicle of the Abbey of St. Trudo, relating how the Countess Heresinda, continually devoted to pious works, and advancing from day to day in holy conversation, constantly frequenting the Church of the blessed Michael the Archangel, laying aside her flesh, was buried there, proceeds to mention that, after her death, the noble Count Eilbert, meditating the Divine law by day and night, going round to visit the precious churches, and consoling those that administered in them, disposed himself to adhere to God with all the affections of his mind; but the multitude of his neighbours rose upon him, and declared that he must leave them an heir. And, therefore, in compliance with their desire, he was a second time married. And so he lived, adhering to Divine meditations, and suffering no temporal impediment of frail and passing honour to shake his good resolution. And then he prepared his tomb in the church of Vasor: nor was the oil of his lamp ever extinguished; nor were his senses disturbed either by losses or flattery; but the residue of his days was spent in holy conversation, and in contending against the snares of the enemy. So, when the Judge knocked, and the Lord announced his coming, he was not found asleep, but watching and expecting his Creator. Thus his soul passed to Christ in the year 980 *.

We read in another chronicle, which at least shows

* Chronic. Abbattæ S. Trudonis, Lib. I. apud Dacher, Spicileg. Tom. VII.

the colour of the age in which it was written, that St. Patrick inquired of the Prince Conallus whether he would assume the habit of a monk? And the prince replied, that his heart was prepared to do whatever the saint should command; and that then the saint replied, "For the sign of power and protection, and for the proof of thy spiritual worth, shalt thou bear thy shield and sceptre; the name of laic shalt thou show, but the mind and the merit of a monk shalt thou possess."

Mabillon gives many examples of kings and princes, who were refrained by holy men from entering into monasteries, on the ground of their presence being essential to the order of society. During many ages, the abbots of monasteries had no greater concern than to prevent kings and dukes from abandoning the government of their states to seek tranquillity in the cloister. William I., Duke of Normandy, would have left every thing, to retire to Jumièges, if the Abbot Mainard would have permitted him Hugues. I., Duke of Burgundy, was only prevented by the Pope's interposition from becoming a monk. The Emperor Henry II., entering the church of the Abbey of St. Vanne, at Verdun, exclaimed, "Hæc requies mea in sæculum sæculi: hic habitabo, quoniam elegi eam." A monk overheard him, and warned the Abbot Richard, who called the emperor into the chapter room, and asked him what was his intention? "I wish," said he, weeping, "to renounce the secular habit, to put on yours, and henceforth to serve only God with your brethren." "Will you then promise," replied the abbot, "according to our rule and the example of Jesus Christ, obedience unto death." "I promise it," answered the emperor. "Well, then, I receive you as a monk: from this day I take charge of your soul, and what I command you, do you perform in the fear of the Lord. Now, I order you to return to the government of the empire which God has entrusted to you, and to watch with all your power, with fear and trembling, for the safety of the whole kingdom." The emperor, bound by his vow, obeyed; but, in fact, in heart he had been long a monk, as he continued to be to the end of his days.

Many noble persons were devoted to monasteries, while they retained the secular habit. They were called

"Donati," and "Donatæ*." Though, in the close of life, many of these men withdrew altogether from the secular cares, they had still continued in it sufficiently long to be considered as having belonged to it, and, therefore, as being examples of the characters in question. Two Doges of Venice shone in sanctity upon the ducal throne, as well as in miracles after their death. It was not till after a glorious reign, that Petrus Urseolus, the twenty-second duke, retired into a monastery of Aquitaine, where he died in the year 976: and Aureus Marepertus, the thirty-ninth duke, had fought in the holy war, and had conquered Saladin, and had governed the republic in wisdom and justice during fifteen years, when he chose to abdicate, and retire into a religious house, there to spend the rest of his days in holy meditations †. St. Theresa describes the character of her uncle, who constrained her, as she travelled, to pass some days in his house. "Our Lord, indeed," she relates, "went on disposing him for his own service, so that, when he grew more into years, he left the world, and became a religious man, and ended his life in such sort, that, I believe," she adds, "he now enjoys the vision of God;" but she represents him "as being at that time, while still in the secular state, a very discreet man, and of great virtue, whose usual exercise was to read good books in the Spanish tongue; and whose discourse was most commonly of God and of the vanity of the world."

Gobertus, the pious and venerable monk of Villers, had been long a Lord and Count of Asperimont, being born of noble and rich parents of Lotharingia. His father Gaufrey had two sons, of whom the eldest was John, and the other Gobertus. They were both handsome boys, elegant and robust amongst all the companions of their youth. On a certain day, the father regarding his two sons, and diligently reflecting, determined that his youngest son, Gobertus, was more adapted for temporal warfare and for the manners of the world, and accordingly he made him the heir of all his possessions; but his brother John, as less fitted for a military life, he made a clerk, who afterwards became Bishop of Metz. It happened, after some time, that while Gober-

* Præfat. VI. Sæcul. § 5. † Italia Sacra, V. 1166.

tus, the knight, was idling away his years in worldly warfare, and had made for himself a name renowned amongst all his contemporaries, he took it in heart to consider that the fame of worldly glory could not be perpetuated in heaven. Therefore, he began to fear God, and to venerate ecclesiastical persons, and to embrace with great desire the blessed Mary, Mother of God, and, beneath the rust of mundane chivalry, to be so devout that he might almost be thought to have attained to perfection, if it were lawful to say so. From that time, he never despised the judgments of the law, but began to avoid all subjects of wickedness; he injured not his neighbour, but he stretched out his hands to the poor; he relieved the oppressed, and constantly endeavoured, in every work of piety, to render God propitious to him. On a certain occasion, he was inspired with a zeal to vindicate the land of Jerusalem from the Infidels, and to destroy the worship of idols, and to give extension to the Divine worship as far as he was able. This was at the time when Frederick II., the wicked emperor, who was a concealed infidel, as was afterwards clearly shown, proposed to go to the Holy Land, that his iniquity might be veiled with a false semblance of good. By prayers and promises, he persuaded Gobertus to join his expedition, and assumed him as his fellow-soldier; but the man of God, discovering his perfidy, turned from him, and having fulfilled his vow with great devotion, he repassed the sea, and returned home. After his return, he did not recede from his good resolutions, like those who believe only for a time, but he firmly adhered to God. He had learned on his pilgrimage to sing the hours of the blessed Virgin Mary: his heart was always fixed on God. It often happened that, going before day to assist at matins, he did not dare to go unarmed, through fear of enemies; and yet he chose rather to hasten to the worship of God, than to pass those hours without fear, luxuriously resting on his bed. Thus, before day, he used often to go armed to the Divine office: being thus armed against the visible and invisible enemy. Moreover, the pious soldier of Christ, wishing to turn to advantage the fruit of his warfare, went to St. James, at Compostella; but at the first hour every morning, he sought the church, where he saw and heard the celebration of the Divine office of the holy Eucharist, that his

soul might daily be sustained by our Lord's body. Thus did the soldier of Christ proceed, going and returning, so that he seemed to fulfil what is written, "Ibunt sancti de virtute in virtutem, donec videant Deum deorum in Sion *."

A general feature of the devotion of the laity in the middle ages consisted in that religious and philosophical turn of their conversation and writing, which so clearly discovered what lay uppermost in the heart. Modern times, which can produce a De Maistre, a Bonald, a Chateaubriand, a Stolberg, a Frederick Schlegel, a Manzoni, and a Pellico, may seem, in this respect, to fear no contrast; but it is not so much the genius of a few great men devoted to religion, among the laity, which is so remarkable in the annals of former ages, as the prevalence of a religious philosophy among that class of society, and the readiness of all men to take part in beautiful disputation respecting the future life. "Non ad solos sacerdotes Ecclesiæ pertinet status: cunctis fidelibus solicitudo ista communis est." This is what St. Avitus says, in his letter to the illustrious man, Senarius †. Accordingly, we find a Gundobadus, King of the Burgundians, whose evil belief diminishes not the force of the example, writing to this holy archbishop, to ask the meaning of certain prophecies in Isaiah and in the Book of Kings, and this saint holding a correspondence with him on various abstruse questions of theology.

Prosper and Hilary were the zealous defenders of the Catholic doctrine against the Pelagians of Marseilles; yet Prosper was neither priest nor clerk: Victorius Aquitanus only calls him "vir venerabilis;" and Pope Gelasius only "vir religiosus;" and Gennade only says, "homo Aquitanicæ regionis." Thus, though a simple laic, he meddled with theology and doctrine, and, in union with Hilary, not only wrote, but also went to Rome to provide against the danger.

St. Victor, a soldier, when in the prison of Marseilles, converted his three guards; and there can be no doubt that, in early times, the knowledge of the Gospel was propagated widely by the Roman soldiers, especially in

* Hist. Monast. Villariensis, Lib. II. cap. II. apud Martene Thesaur. Anecdot. Tom. III.

† S. Aviti Epist. Tom. XXXVI.

Pannonia, by the armies of Trajan and Aurelius *. This spirit continued to prevail during the middle ages, so that similar examples could be multiplied from their heroic annals.

Celebrated was the history of the Sultan, who sent his daughter to persuade three knights of Laon, who were in prison, to abjure the Christian faith. They, on the contrary, converted her; and on their escape and return, founded, in 1141, the church of our Lady of Liesse, three leagues from Laon.

Antony Galvan, a Portuguese, one of the most illustrious warriors of his age, and as renowned in history for his piety as for his valour, being governor of one of the Molucca Islands, having no priest to send as a missionary to instruct the natives of Macazar, who were desirous of embracing Christianity, in consequence of the example of two of their fellow-countrymen who had been converted by this governor, sent as a catechist a soldier, named Francis de Castro, who, being prevented from arriving there by a tempest, occasion was furnished to another layman to exercise this office of religion; for Antonio Payva, a Portuguese merchant, having landed there to take in a load of sandal-wood, the King of Supa came to converse with him on the subject of the Christian religion; and this good merchant was able to speak so much to the purpose, that the king was converted, and all his court, being baptized by Payva, who was now dispatched by them with a charge to send priests to that country. This happened shortly before the visit of St. Francis Xavier to Macazar.

St. Odo says, that Count Gerald, when a young man, surpassed many clerks in his knowledge of the Holy Scriptures †. This was no uncommon accomplishment in the laity of the middle ages. King Alphonso of Naples and Arragon, who used to read Cæsar and Livy every day, and who translated the Epistles of Seneca into Spanish, had read, with the utmost care, the whole Bible, with commentaries, fourteen times, from beginning to end ‡.

In the life of the Count of Rosemberg, it is said that

* Germania Sacra, I.

† De Vita Geraldi Bibliothec. Cluniacensis, 69.

‡ Drexelius, de Conformit. Lib. III. c. 2.

he had been accustomed from his earliest years to read the Holy Scriptures; so that his heart was for ever after impressed with a sense of their Divine purport, and that the world was never able to efface the knowledge and love of the truths of the Gospel. Antoine du Faix, in his book of instructions, entitled "L'Esperon de Discipline," composed for Charles, Duke of Savoy, in recommending books, advises him, above all, to become well versed in the New Testament, that he may be on his guard against the heretics of the age. The Abbé Gouget observes that this author had a profound knowledge of human nature, and that his idea of education was admirable. We find the Constable de Clisson, in his last will, bequeathing to the Dame de Rochefort, a little cross of pearls, and his Bible in French *. We read of Mathieu, son of Burchard V., Seigneur de Montmorency, in the reign of Philippe Augustus, that he had been brought up in all the arts of chivalry in the castle of Colombe; and that the monks of the Abbey of Laval, which had been endowed by the first barons of Montmorency, had instructed him in the science of the Holy Scriptures: and Mabillon relates that the heroic Duc de Montausier had read the New Testament one hundred and thirteen times †.

In fact, the laity of the middle ages, like the first Christians, might have been named disciples, which term applies to men who occupy themselves in studying the doctrines of salvation, sitting at the apostolic feet. The sentences of St. Jerome and St. Augustin were then as familiar to chivalrous ears, as those of the classic orators and poets to the modern scholar. Venerable tradition was widely disseminated; kings and barons would have homilies of the holy Fathers read aloud at their tables both morning and evening; and so general were the effects, that theologians, proving the impossibility of introducing secretly any new doctrine into the Church, show the astonishment and opposition which would have been instantly made, not only by the clergy and the religious order, but also by the laity, who were no less conspicuous in piety and in knowledge of their religion ‡.

* Vie des Grands Capitaines Française du Moyen Age, IV. 200. † De Studiis Monast. Pars III. c. 2.

‡ De la Hogue Tractat. de Eucharist, cap. 11. art. 111.

The language of the clergy was therefore that of the Paschal Sermon of Richard of St. Victor. "Christ our pasch is immolated. Brethren, you know the Scriptures and their virtue: therefore our sermon to you will not be doctrine, but admonition, and the recalling to your memory of known things. From the fountain whence I drink, drink also ye. Where I draw, you draw: if I draw water in joy from the fountains of the Saviour, you also draw there. Judge therefore as spiritual, whether the water which I present to you flows from the midst of the fountain—whether it is drawn from the fountains of the Saviour. Christ our pasch is immolated *."

Peter, Abbot of Moustier-la-Celle, in the year 1154, dedicated his book, entitled De Disciplina Claustrali, to Henry the Liberal, Count of Champagne, by whom he was greatly loved †.

Dom Carlos de Tapia, Marquis de Belmonte, composed a treatise on religion, which was much esteemed in Spain. The Emperor Charles V. who had often wished to raise Louis of Blois to the highest dignities, had such an admiration for his writings, that he used to carry his ascetical books with him wherever he went, and they constituted his ordinary reading when in his retreat at St. Just.

It was the same in the first ages. Marius Victorinus Afer, a consular man, wrote four books against the Arians, which merited the praise of St. Augustin, and a page in the Bibliotheca Patrum. Charlemagne wrote a preface for the Collection which Paul the Deacon made by his orders from the Homilies of the Catholic Fathers ‡: and there is even an Epistle from his pen, De Gratiâ Septiformis Spiritus. Angilbert, Abbot of Corby, sent the book of St. Augustin, De Doctrina Christiana, to the Emperor Lewis, and presented him with some verses on that occasion, in which he commemorates the pious humility with which he studies day and night to investigate the secrets of sacred wisdom §: and Adalbert, Bishop of Lyons, exhorts King Robert to read the books of Augustin, Dionysius, and Gregory the Great; instances which make Mabillon observe how familiar with sacred

* Serm. in die Paschæ.
† Desguerrois, Hist. du Diocèse de Troyes, 291.
‡ Mabilonii Vetera Analecta, 73. § Id. 425.

readings were the ancient kings of the Francs. Symphorius Amalarius sends his books on the divine office to the kings, Lewis and Lothaire.

In later ages, many holy books were published, by means of the munificent zeal of lay persons, coming forward, like the Countess of Riccini in modern times, who has translated and printed at her expense, at Modena, a celebrated French work in defence of religion.

The women of the feudal castle were often skilled in theology: for, in so representing them, poets adhere closely to historical fact. And what shall we say of the theological lore possessed by the artists, poets, and musicians of the middle ages? Take any example from the innumerable instances that will occur to every one's memory. Behold that awful picture of Christ in the garden of Olives, by Guido of Bologna, which is in the museum of the Louvre. What a profound sense was here of the mystery of the passion, and of the sacrifice of the man God! Consider again Michael Angelo. Enter his house in the Via Ghibillina at Florence, where you see represented the various remarkable honours which were paid to him by the Pope, the Grand Duke of Florence, and the veneration of the people, with his own portrait, so expressive of the simplicity and manly carelessness of genius. What do you find besides in these walls which are in the same state as when he left them? His chapel and his holy paintings of devotion.

The King St. Louis used often to converse with the young Joinville as they were on the passage across the sea, going to the crusade. "Senechal," said he to him one day, "Quelle chose: est-ce que Dieu?" "Sire," replied Joinville, "c'est si souveraine et bonne chose que meilleure ne peut être." "Vraiment, c'est moult bien répondu," said the king. "Autre demande vous ferai-je; savoir; lequel vous aimeriez mieux être lépreux et ladre, ou avoir commis et commettre un péché mortel?" Joinville must have known well what was the answer that would please the holy young king, so faithful to the lessons of his saintly mother Blanche, but in a spirit of juvenile rudeness and levity, or at the bottom, perhaps with that feeling which St. Francis de Sales ascribes to true humility, that would rather be taken for proud than humble, replied, that he would rather have committed thirty mortal sins than become a leper. The impression

which these light words made upon the good holy king, belongs to history. "Quand les frères furent départis de là, il me rappelle tout seul, et me fit seoir à ses pieds, et me dit: comment avez vous osé dire ce que vous avez dit? et je lui réponds que encore je le dirais. Et il va me dire: Ha! fou musart, musart, vous y êtes déçu; car vous savez qu'il n'est lèpre si laide que d'être en péché mortel. Et vous prie que, pour l'amour de Dieu premier, et pour l'amour de moi, vous reteniez ce dit en votre cœur?"—"What can be more admirable," says a modern critic, "than the goodness of this king and saint, who, though a king and a saint, does not grow angry at the reply of the young man, but allows the witnesses to retire, and does not reprimand him until he is with him alone?"

There is on record the judgment pronounced by a nobleman at the court of Henry IV. of France, in reply to the king's question respecting the relative merit of two religious orders. The conversation of the court, so far from excluding, sanctioned similar topics. Even so late as the age of Louis XIV. warriors, like Turenne and Condè, might have been heard discoursing upon the mysteries of religion,—women of the first quality, like Madame de Sevigne, in letters to their friends, treating theological questions with erudition, while others, like the Duchess de Longueville, were wholly renouncing the world, and flying to cloisters, in order more effectually to assuage their thirst for heaven.

The letters of Fenelon to the Marquis de Seignelai were expressly designed to show the necessity for laymen to be well instructed in their religion. A great prince and military hero, the Duc de Chevreuse, in his letters to the same prelate, expresses himself with the utmost facility and precision on some of the most abstruse questions of theology: and the editor of this correspondence remarks, that the same learning belonged to many noblemen of the time. Certainly, the humble artless replies of the young Duke of Burgundy to the letters of the Archbishop, which informed him in plain terms of the cutting language of the world respecting him, and in details which must have been most wounding to the pride of human breasts, indicate a degree of piety and of ascetic merit, which would edify men striving after perfection in a cloister.

The reserve and obstinate silence of the moderns on topics of religion, would not indeed have been permitted by the doctors of the middle ages. "Some virtues," says St. Bonaventura, "we are bound to show before men, and others to conceal. We are bound to make known our faith, charity, justice, truth, and contempt of the world—and we are to conceal extraordinary graces and alms *." The heathen sage prescribed a practice which the moderns would think becoming only in a monastery. "Let discourse concerning God," said Epictetus, "be renewed daily more than food for your body †." Few of them, at the age of Cephalus, the father of Polemarchus, would say like him to a religious instructor, "If I had still the power of going up to the city, I would not ask you to come down here to Piræus, for I would then go to you; but now you must indeed come oftener here for my sake: for be assured, in proportion as other pleasures, those connected with the body, wither and fall from me, the pleasure of hearing noble discourse, and the fervour with which I long for it, increase continually ‡." But precisely similar to this would be the language of old laymen in the middle ages to the monks of the nearest cloister, to whom the knights of chivalry are represented as listening with eager fondness. Witness Spenser's knight, who lodged with the hermit:—

> "With faire discours the evening so they pas,
> For that old man of pleasing wordes had store,
> And well could file his tongue, as smooth as glas;
> He told of saintes and popes, and ever more
> He strow'd an Ave-Mary after and before §."

Reverential and devout in the highest degree was the common tone of heroic conversations during the reign of those manners which had been created by faith. Dialogues, speculative and mysterious, were held in the evening in castles, under the vaulted roofs of the old manorial house, in parks, under the shade of melancholy boughs, and during rides, along the storm-beaten shores of the wild ocean.

* De Reformat. Hom. Inter. cap. 18.
† Epicteti Sententiæ. ‡ Plato, De Repub. Lib. I.
§ Fairy Queen, I. I.

The piety of the laity, during the ages of faith, is also seen in a very remarkable light in their conduct relative to the clergy, on which body it would seem as if their character had exercised no small influence. For while the laity venerated the clergy, the clergy respected the laity, and zealously favoured such of them as showed a disposition to a holy life, not excluding them from their society and from assisting at their offices, as if on account of their secular habit, they must necessarily have the mind and manners of the vulgar and profane, but rather encouraging them, and granting them free access to their holy cloisters and learned schools.

Paul the Deacon, in his Epistle to King Charles, son of Pepin, explains to him the various customs of the monks of Monte Casino respecting the division and chant of their Psalmody, as also their rules of fasting and abstinence *. Let it be observed too, that all this was done with a perfect understanding and from exact principle.

Hugo of St. Victor makes the remark, that St. Paul, writing to Philemon, who was invested with no dignity of ecclesiastical administration, but merely a man estimable among the people, in the form of his salutation gives no precedence to the priest over the laic, but names Philemon before Archippus, who was Bishop of Colossa †.

In truth, there was good reason for respecting the heroic piety of the laity, which in some instances seemed to leave the devotion of the religious in the shade.—When the King of England threatened the monks of Citeaux with the loss of their possessions in his kingdom for giving an asylum to St. Thomas of Canterbury, they gently gave the archbishop to understand that he could not remain with them any longer. "O religion! O religion! where art thou?" exclaimed the King of France, scandalized at this cowardice of the monks. "Lo, they whom we thought dead to the world, now banish, for the sake of temporal goods, him who is an exile for the cause of God ‡."—We read in the Spiritual Meadow of Sophronius, that when three Anachorites came to the cave in which Nicholas lived, they found him conversing

* Chronic. S. Monast. Casinensis.

† Annot. Elucid. Quæst. super Epist. ad Philem.

‡ Vita Quadrip. 85.

with a secular man, and asking him to say something that would be edifying *.

We do not find that the clergy, in their solicitude for the interests of laymen, were above attending to the influence of locality upon sensitive minds. At least, they did not consign men to live with the dissipated in the very precincts of corruption, with the slaves of worldly industry and vain pleasure, surrounded with every object that can debase and contaminate the purity and nobleness of the soul, and then express wonder that these persons were not saints. Wishing them to be truly spiritual, they endeavoured to facilitate the way before them, by using all the human means which their experience and sagacity could point out as calculated to accomplish that end. They invited men therefore to join in the society of the holy, and they allowed them to reside in buildings, of which the very walls seemed to proclaim the wisdom and happiness of the just. The laity accordingly, in consequence of these advantages, comprised other characters besides the man of business and pleasure. There were in that class the scholar and the man of contemplative habits, who attended to the duties of Mary as well as of Martha.

This reciprocal influence was most powerful in the middle ages. The clergy were consoled, strengthened, and perhaps, not unfrequently retained in the spirit of their order, by the noble and devout character of the men whom they guided, as Manfrid in the tragedy is warned and comforted by the rude chamois hunter.

It would be thought strange in our times to find laymen and military nobles administering fraternal admonition, in letters addressed to priests and saints, and consoling them in calamity, by repeating texts of the holy Scripture. Yet such conduct would not have been deemed indecorous in the middle ages. After the death of Pope Clement V. when there was great opposition of interests, and delay in electing his successor, Dante, so remarkable for the submissive docility of his genius, wrote a fine letter to the dispersed cardinals, in which he exhorts them to re-unite immediately, to stop this anarchy, so injurious to the Church, and to bring back the holy see to Rome. In fact, nothing is more common

* Cap. 154.

in the literature of the middle ages, than to find letters, and other documents of this kind, which one might suppose had been composed by persons of a religious profession. The testament of Count Gerard, in which he founds the monastery of Vezelay, in Burgundy, concludes with these words—"We pray you all then, most holy fathers and bishops, by our Redeemer, that to this work of our devotion you would always continue labourers and assistants in all things, that these our pious and dearest servants may always attend to the interests of devotion and religion, and that in all things they may shew themselves as the ministers of God, giving no offence to any one, that the most religious and holy order of their ministry may not be blamed; that the pontiff of the apostolic seat may be a ruler to them, and comforter and guardian, being united together by the most faithful charity and religious obedience, as members of the body of the Church, and worthy of being joined to the head of that whole body, which is Christ *."

When Count Aylwin, alderman of England, was labouring under his last sickness, coming to the abbey of Ramsey, which he had founded, he gave spiritual counsel to the monks, and began as follows, as he stood leaning against a pillar:—"Be not angry, my brethren, seeing that you, being learned and instructed in divine discipline, should be admonished by a layman and a sinner. For in ploughing the earth, you see that the oxen who go first are induced to labour more cheerfully, by hearing the voices of those that follow them." Then after a long spiritual discourse, which might have been delivered by an abbot, he took a solemn leave of the brethren, and passed over in a boat from the abbey †.

Nor was the zeal of the laity in these relations confined to admonitions; it prompted them to acts corresponding. Ladislaus, King of Hungary, in the year 1404, addressed the governor of the city of Bovinum in these terms:—"Grievous to us are all injuries incurred by any of our faithful people; but those inflicted on the churches and on ecclesiastical persons are so much the

* Historia Vezeliacensis, Lib. I. apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. III.

† Hist. Ramesiensis, Pars II. cap. 62, apud Gale Hist. Brit. Tom. II.

more so, as we naturally regard them with a more especial affection *."

Charles, Count of Flanders, was a great warrior, and withal a pious and just man. He was so humble and devout towards God, and all ecclesiastical men and monks, that he used often to intreat them that they would tell him of his faults in the proper time and place, and that they would pray to God for him. In his court, he used always to dispatch first the causes of ecclesiastics, saying that the servants of God ought not to be detained in the courts of princes. It happened once that John, abbot of St. Bertin, at St. Omer, entered the count's court on the day of the Epiphany, to whom the count said, "My Lord Abbot, who is to sing high mass for us this day, on this holy solemnity, in your church?" The abbot replied, "My Lord, there are an hundred monks in the monastery, so that there will be some good man to celebrate it." The count answered, "On such a festival you ought to have been in your college to chant the psalms with the chanters, to feast with those that feast, and to give recreation to your monks who labour in the service of God; for to this end did our fathers assign revenues to you." "My Lord," said the abbot, "necessity compelled me; for a certain soldier has oppressed us." The count replied, "It would have been sufficient to have informed me of this by a letter or a messenger, for it is my business to defend you, as it is yours to pray to God for me." Then he gave redress, and the abbot returned consoled†.

The devout laity knew how to reprove what was evil in members of the clergy. "Baldwin the Bearded, Count of Flanders, began to build a castle at Bergen, but changing his resolution, he constructed instead of it a monastery, in honour of St. Winoc. The cause of it was this. The canons of St. Martin at that place were reported to be but little devout, and it was said that they neglected the divine offices. The count, desiring to ascertain the truth, disguised himself one night, and when the warden opened the church to strike the signal for matins, he entered, as if to pray. The warden having

* Italia Sacra, Tom. VIII. 266.

† Chronic. S. Bertini, cap. 41, Pars II. apud Martene Thesaurus Anecdotorum, Tom. III.

struck the signal for matins, and no one coming, wished to shut the church door, and he obliged the count, whom he mistook for a poor man, to go out; but the count replying that he wished to hear matins, the other told him that it was all finished, and that they never rose for matins. Upon this the count resolved to build the new monastery, and thither he translated the body of St. Winoc, and he richly endowed it, and placed in it monks from the abbey of St. Bertin at St. Omer*."

Gervaise attributes the conversion of the Abbot Suger as much to the admonitions of Charles the Good, Count of Flanders, as to the grief which his death occasioned him. Charles, a prince of consummate virtue, was distinguished both by his valour and his piety. He had been offered the kingdom of Jerusalem during the imprisonment of Baldwin II. and the crown of the empire after the death of Henry V. and he refused both through Christian humility. His conversation almost always turned upon piety; and Suger, who had the honour of being often in his company during the campaign of King Louis against the nobles of Clermont, was charmed with his goodness; whereas, on the other hand, the count was pleased with the abilities of Suger. The count was attached to him from a consideration of his talents, and of his being an abbot; for he loved and respected all churchmen. Meanwhile, the virtue of the prince had made an impression upon the mind of Suger, and had inspired him with a kind of veneration, so that he often styled him blessed and a saint, and herein was not deceived, for he only anticipated the judgment of the Church. This union of hearts being formed, the count returned to Flanders and Suger to Paris, where, immediately on arriving, he heard of the tragical death of the count, who was assassinated in the Church of St. Donatian, at Bruges. All the circumstances of this detestable murder were full of horror. Being an exact and firm administrator of justice, especially in defending the poor and helpless from all acts of violence, he had resolved to investigate the measures of certain men who had made a fortune during a famine, by availing themselves of the distress of the people, with whom he had sympathized to such a degree as to make himself poor, and even to sell

* Chronic. S. Bertini, cap. 36, Pars 2.

his furniture and clothes to assist them. Two of these wicked rich men resolved to cut him off, and for this purpose selected the church as the proper place. It was on Wednesday after the second Sunday of Lent. The count being risen, distributed his alms according to his constant custom, the first thing each day, barefooted, and kissing the hands of the poor, with a great faith, regarding in them Jesus Christ. Then he went to the church; and as he proceeded thither, a stranger warned him to be on his guard, but he replied, "Our precautions are vain against the misfortunes which menace us. It is enough for our peace if we have the happiness to appertain to God. He is all-powerful and always present, and nothing can happen to us contrary to his will. Nothing can be more glorious to a mortal man, who cannot guard himself against death, than to die for the defence of justice and truth." Thus saying, he proceeded on his way. On entering the church his chaplains left him to sing Prime, and he went to his prayers before the altar of the blessed Virgin. After many genuflexions, he prostrated himself wholly on the ground, to say the seven Penitential Psalms. The conspirators now entered with naked swords under their cloaks. They found the prince in that posture, with some money near him, which his chaplain had placed for alms, which he used to give even during his prayers. One of them, named Bouchard, touched him that he might raise his head; but the count, thinking that it was a poor woman whom he had seen near him asking alms, took a piece of money and raised himself a little, at which moment the assassin struck him with his scimitar, so that the brains fell upon the pavement. The others then fell upon his body, and even cut off his arm, which he had stretched out to give alms. The news of his death struck Suger with great force. The count had given him salutary advice: for if Charles the Good loved persons consecrated to God, he wished at the same time that their conduct should be edifying; and he had been constrained to testify more than once to the abbot what he thought of the tumultuous and secular life which he passed at the court of France. The words of this prince now returned to his heart; and this was the second battery used by God to conquer that great soul rebellious to his grace.

In the days of decay of discipline at St. Denis, when

Abaillard, though persecuted by the evil monks, could not obtain leave to quit that monastery, the cause being referred to the royal council, Stephen of Garlande, seneschal of France, a man of acute mind, is thought to have contrived, by an ingenious speech, both to urge the claims of Abaillard, and also to give a useful lesson to the religious themselves. "It is for the king's interest," said he, "that this abbey be not reformed, as Abaillard would have it if he remains there, because the greater the irregularity, the more money will the king be able to draw from it. Therefore (he concluded) it was for the interest of all parties, since the monks themselves were unwilling to be reformed, that Abaillard should obtain his dismissal*."

In nothing, however, does the zeal of the laity in these times appear more amiable, than in the love with which it inspired them for the clergy, and in that thirst which seems to have constantly impelled them

> "To talk with good men, or come near their haunts†."

Poets, in praise of a king whom they loved, would remind men of the love which he entertained for the clergy, as Martial d'Auvergne, pronouncing the eulogium of King Charles VII. exclaims,

> "Las le feu Roy Charles le Débonnaire
> Aymoit les clercs‡."

To love clerks and knights was the boast of chivalry. "Mais les clers et les chevaliers en ma jeunesse ay voulu hauter voulentiers," says the historian of Du Guesclin, "et souvent et le cueur de moy ferment y trait§."

The Archduke, Leopold William of Austria, is described as evincing a particular affection for all monks of every order. "He took delight in their company; and while a boy, he used to run up to them as soon as he saw them coming. In maturer years he evinced for them the greatest respect: it was his delight to converse familiarly with them, and to hear them speak of spiritual things.

* Vie D'Abell. Liv. II. † Dante, Purg. XVI.
‡ Les Vigiles de la Mort du Roi Charles VII.
§ Chronique de Du Guesclin.

He used often to dine with them, and he would kiss their habits, and would always salute them with reverence whenever he met them on the way."

The famous Robert the Strong, Count of Blois, had so singular a devotion for St. Aignan, Bishop of Orleans, that he changed the name of his Castle Hayard, and called it St. Aignan.

Until the fifteenth century, it was the etiquette of courts that a bishop should take the precedence of a prince. It was deemed a noble privilege of illustrious families to have the right of showing the first honours to a bishop on his entrance into his diocese. The Seigneurs de Montmorenci, possessing the first fief of the bishopric of Paris, were the first barons who used to support the person of the bishop on his entry, and to hold the dais over his head on his reception *.

The Bishop of Nantes used to be conducted on horseback from the almonry of St. Clement, where he had slept, to the gate of St. Peter, by the Baron of Châteaubriand, who held the bridle. He was thence borne in a chair to the cathedral by the four first barons of the diocese—the Barons of Pontchâteau, Retz, Ancenes, and Châteaubriand. The noble family of De Thuissy enjoyed similar privileges, in relation to the honour paid to the Archbishop of Rheims.

It is not irrelevant here to make mention of these forms, since they were clearly monuments of the love of the laity for the clergy in early times; the indications of which, however, are undoubtedly beheld in a more interesting point of view, when we proceed to remark its spontaneous action in the various circumstances of life. When St. Aidan first came out of Ireland to Lindisfarne, King Oswald received him with the utmost reverence and humility, and took great delight in hearing his holy discourses. Then was seen that beautiful spectacle of a king serving as an interpreter of a holy priest, while preaching the Gospel to a people whose language was not perfectly known to him: for St. Aidan did not speak English: but the king, during the long period of his exile, had learned the language of the Scots †.

* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. III. 388.

† Petr. Lombard. Archiepiscop. Admach. de Hibernia Commentar. 187.

Burchard the Pious, Count of Corbeil, is said by historians to have loved the persons of all ecclesiastics *.—Louis-le-Gros, when a youth, receiving his education in the abbey of St. Denis, used often to leave the company of great lords, who used to come to the abbey from time to time to pay him their respects, in order that he might rejoin the company of Suger, with whom he loved to converse. In the year 1372, Charles le Sage, for the love which he bore to brother Peter of Villiers, of the Dominican convent of Troyes, who was then his confessor, ennobled, by letters from the Louvre, his brother Nicolas Champagne of Villiers, and all his posterity †.

It is recorded of the Abbot Euticius, that he was so much beloved by the Emperor Louis le Debonnaire, that "he built a monastery for him within the walls of his palace:" and of St. Benedict, the Abbot of Ania, we read—"because on many accounts he was necessary to him, it pleased the emperor to provide a suitable place for him, not far from the palace, in which he could rest with a few others." Lewis, in fact, built this monastery of Tuda, near the palace of Aix-la-Chapelle, where he frequently remained ‡.

In the year 1145, Gui de Vaugrigneuse, son of Burchard Seigneur de Vaugrigneuse, showed such an affection for the monks of Longpont, that he would not set out for the war in the Holy Land, which began about this time, until he had embraced all the monks of the abbey, in which house his nephew was at the time professed §.

In all these instances, we may be sure that the motive was the same as that spoken of by the author of the Chronicles of St. Benign at Dijon, who, after describing how greatly Halynardus, Archbishop of Lyons, in the eleventh century, was loved by Robert and Henry, kings of the Francs, and also by the Emperor Conrad and his son Henry, adds, that he was thus beloved and venerated by them, "pro religiosâ conversatione ac famâ sanctitatis ||." It was for the same reason that, when St. An-

* Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. XI.
† Desguerrois, Hist. du Diocèse de Troye, 378.
‡ Mabillon, Præfat. in III. Sæcul. S. Benedict. § 8.
§ Lebeuf, Hist. du Diocèse de Paris, Tom. IX. 230.
|| Chronic. S. Benigni Divionensis apud Dacher. Spicileg. T. I.

selm was on the continent, kings and nobles sought with such fervour to show him honour and friendship *.

The proofs of love for holy men, evinced by the laity during the ages of faith, are often contained in episodes of great beauty, from which scenes might be taken that would not be unworthy of the noblest muse.

It was at a paschal solemnity, when the nobles of the whole kingdom, both clergy and laity, were assembled at the court of King Edgar, that Count Aylwyn first met St. Oswald. The count was a devout and brave warrior, venerable and courteous, revering the love of God in others, and adorned with so many graces, that it was doubtful whether one ought most to praise or to wonder, on seeing such virtue in an illiterate man. He was struck with the countenance and air of the holy bishop on seeing him chanting the office of the dead at the funeral of a certain soldier, whose body he was escorting to Glastonbury. No sooner was the office finished than he went up and accosted the holy man. "Long ago, holy father, I was wishing for an opportunity of forming a friendship with you, and of being able to refresh myself by listening to your sweet and learned discourse. I am a man under the power of another, and having others under me, whom nobility of birth, abundance of riches, the sinful wisdom of the world, the gift of speaking, and in short, the public favour of the poor and rich, hath exalted. And since all power is from God, I fear lest I should abuse that power to the destruction of my soul—for I know, that to whom much is committed, much will be required." The holy priest, beholding the faith of the man, admired and replied to him with a serene countenance—"It pleases me to contract a friendship with you, most noble of men—it pleases me to observe this affection of pure liberality, which preventing all my merit, before I had boldness sufficient to demand of you, hath given me such proof of love. I am thankful to God for having sown such seed in your heart, the fruit of which I behold so abundant: and I trust that it may lead you to feel hope rather than security. Consider therefore, dearest son, that in proportion as you are exalted in secular power, so are your life and works beheld by all men. And although some are preferred above others, yet we

* Will. Malmes. de Gestis Pontif. Anglor. Lib. I.

have all an equal beginning of life, and we are all under the same law of death. We are all alike born in sorrow, and we live in sorrow, and in sorrow we terminate our course, nature constituting to us all one common origin and end, since our only difference can be in the degree of our separation from God. What doth noble birth profit him who is under the dominion of sin? He is truly noble who shines in virtue of mind and manners. In all the Scripture you will find that the poor are commended, and the rich made but little of. It is useful and lawful to have riches, provided you remember that it is the mind which is to govern. It is lawful to have command, but it is safer to be subject—for destruction is near all that is exalted. Witness him whose body we now carry to the tomb, who lately was clothed in silk raiment, and who had such rank and power in the court of kings!—Now all is departed from him, excepting whatever merit he may have laid up in store."—

At these words the duke began to weep, and said, "What then will become of me, holy father, who am involved in so many necessities opposing my good-will—regal affairs, warlike engagements, stipendiary and judicial?" To whom the holy bishop replied, "All these worldly occupations, my dear son, may contribute to your increase in justice, if you preserve equity in all your ways, and mercy in your judgments, and simplicity in your intentions: but since sometimes even a good intention may be darkened by a false species of right, you should redeem your sins by alms to the poor and to the churches. Therefore, if in any part of your territory you should have a place proper for those who profess a religious life, you should build a monastery there in honour of God, and collect holy men there to celebrate the divine service, by whose prayers your sins may be expiated. I will co-operate with you, and will grant faculties." The count replied, "Venerable father, there is a certain farm on my lands called Ramsey, surrounded by a marsh, and sufficiently adapted for the retreat of such men—for it is solitary and peaceful—it is also adorned with many trees, and contains fertile meadows. Formerly there was no building there but a stable for my flocks, but lately having been admonished by a dream in sickness, I constructed a small wooden cell in that place to lodge monks of St. Benedict, where three at

present reside, and where I had proposed to build a church." The bishop approved of this intention, and consented to accompany the count to inspect the place. The result of this journey was the foundation of that abbey—the bishop testifying his joy, and saying, "Be this your place of rest for ever. Here dwell after your death, since you have chosen it. The occasion of building this house will be a bond of everlasting friendship between us; for by a temporal building we shall, if our faith fail not, prepare to ourselves a mansion of eternal safety *."

Indeed, almost every monastery was a monument of the love for holy men which animated the laity during the ages of faith. Gaufrey, the illustrious Count of Poictiers, whose noble ancestors had founded so many religious houses, was a man of the greatest piety and justice. He founded the abbey of Poictiers, and great was his joy when he saw the abbot and his monks established in this noble house, which he had built for them. Whenever he was at Poictiers, he suffered no day to pass without alighting there; and when he came from a distance, he would not go to his palace before he had visited the monks, whom he used to call his lords. He used to go into the kitchen and into the cellar, and ask what the monks were to eat that day; and when he heard that it was some eggs, or a cheese, or some little fish, immediately he would order his purse-bearer to give money, that something better might be prepared. Who could describe with what obedience, liberality, and piety, he would minister to their wants? how benevolent he was to all men, but to them above all, how humble and how devout! When lord of many, he made himself the servant of his monks! Who so greatly honoured, adorned, and edified the church! On one occasion a certain monk who had been injured came before him, at the moment when he was greatly occupied in the care of public affairs, so that he answered rather sharply; when the monk, seeing himself slighted, went away dejected, but the duke soon recollected himself, and was grieved to think that he had dismissed the servant of God sad. He sent after him immediately, and had him brought back. Then he begged his pardon for having made such an

* Hist. Ramesiensis, Hist Brit. Tom. III.

unkind answer, and gave him justice as to the cause of his complaint *.

Of the love entertained for Arnulph, the thirteenth abbot of Ville Moutiers, both by monks and seculars, the history of that monastery gives many instances. "By princes," says the chronicle, "he was greatly venerated, especially by Henry, Duke of Brabant, who had a singular affection for him and his convent. Hence, when he had assembled the great lords of his territories in council, he used to invite the man of God to come there; and when the nobles saw him come, they used to say that the key of the council was left with him. When this true pastor had saluted them all, and had been received with worthy honour, he would ask the lord duke for what cause he had called him into his presence, when such arduous affairs were to be arranged, since it was known to him that he was a simple man, and inexperienced in earthly matters: and the duke would say to him, 'My dear father, I have called you here and received you with this honour, that my nobles and judges may see what love I have for you, and for your whole convent; that they may never molest you or yours, but rather nourish and defend you. Do you be the abbot within in the things which pertain to the honour of God and the salvation of souls, and I will be the abbot without, in all things which pertain to the utility of your house, in guarding your possessions, and punishing all who shall presume to disturb you.' This noble prince was in the habit of receiving every year a tunic, made of the cloth of our monastery; and he used to say that he feared no danger when he was armed with such a habit. When he died, he ordered himself to be buried in our monastery, which he so dearly loved and so highly honoured. When his obsequies had been celebrated in Lorraine, and his body was approaching the monastery, the community went out to meet it processionally; but when we first beheld his coffin, our entrails were moved, and our tears flowed, and we could not refrain them, considering our patron, who had so long defended and honoured us.—Who can relate what prayers and psalms and masses were

* Fragment, Historiæ Monasterii Pictarensis apud Martene Thesaur. Anecdot. Tom. III.

offered for him? He knows them who gave us the will and the power, who is God blessed for ever *."

Almost all the monks of Canterbury having been exiled by King John, in consequence of their resisting his resolution to intrude by force an archbishop upon that church, these holy men passed into France, and were received every where by the abbots with all humanity and piety. The Count of Gisnen, hearing that they had entered his territories, went out affectionately to meet Gaufry the prior and his monks, and saluting them, he led them with great marks of honour to his castle of Tornehem to his countess, and there he compelled them to dine in his family, and he himself officiously served them at table, and there was a grand and abundant feast for them; and though there were more than eighty monks, he provided a horse, or a conveyance of some kind, for every one of them, and he ordered them to be conducted as far as St. Omer by his own servants, of whom he is said to have had as many as a hundred, some on horseback, and others, as is the custom, attending on foot: and when their coming was announced to the convent of St. Bertin, they were met processionally, and then shown all hospitality, and thus they passed through France and Flanders, till the year 1213, when they were honourably recalled to Canterbury†.

These details are assuredly interesting. What proof do they furnish of the meek filial reverence of the laity, during the middle ages, for persons of holy profession! and what an insight do they yield into the real secret of that spirit of submission to them, for which this period of history is so centaurically blamed by modern writers! Let us take but one example more, and that from any of the letters addressed to St. Hildegard, which are all very remarkable.

Philip, Count of Flanders, addresses her in these terms:—"Your holiness should know that I am prepared to do whatever I shall learn may please you, because your holy conversation and virtuous life have often

* Hist. Monast. Villariensis, Lib. I. cap. 3, apud Martene Thesaur. Anecdot. Tom. III.

† Chronicon Andrensis Monasterii apud Dacher. Spicileg. Tom. IX. p. 563.

sounded in my ears sweeter than all fame. For although I am a sinner and unworthy, yet I love with my whole heart the servants and friends of Christ, and I gladly honour them in every manner with veneration, remembering that Scripture, 'Multum valet assidua justi deprecatio.' Therefore I send to the grace of your piety the bearer of these presents, my most faithful servant, who will speak with you for me, a wretched sinner. And I desired greatly to speak with you, but my occupations are every day so urgent, that I have not leisure to do this: for the time approaches when I am to go to Jerusalem, for which end I need great preparation, and concerning this design, to intimate your advice to me by letters: for I believe the fame of my name and actions has often reached you, and I am in great need of the mercy of God in many things. Therefore, with great earnestness of entreaty I beseech you to intercede with the Lord for me, who am a miserable and unworthy sinner, and, as far as the Divine mercy shall enable you, to inquire from God what is expedient for me, and to send me your advice by the bearer of these presents, stating in what manner I should act in order that the name of Christianity may be exalted in my times, and the dire ferocity of the Saracens repressed, and whether it will be better for me to remain in that land or to return."

Such, then, was the spirit of reverence and love for holy persons, which animated the laity of the middle ages: such is the testimony which it supplies to the intensity of their thirst after justice. It only remains to close this division of our history with some general reflections, suggested by the facts which have been passed in review.

CHAPTER X.

To know the character of men, we do not inquire what they believe, or what they hope, but what they love *: which remark of St. Augustin may be verified by referring to Homer, whose expression for the character of a people is always taken from the object of their predominant affection—as where he speaks of the Taphians loving the oar †,—as also in any of the Platonic writers, who assign places to men in relation to philosophy, according to the particular love which they cultivate, in proportion as they are lovers of the body or of the soul.

If we apply this rule to the history of men during the middle ages, we shall not be long at a loss to determine the name which peculiarly suits them. Distinctions, indeed, and exceptions, undoubtedly there were; but the general language held respecting the laity, can leave no doubt on the mind of any impartial investigator. It is not that they loved glory, loved financial speculations, loved the law, loved assemblies, loved society—but we read constantly that they loved justice, loved communion with God, loved the churches, loved the saints, loved the clergy, loved the monasteries, loved the poor, that they despised the life of the world, through love of the celestial kingdoms.

Our conclusion must be—not that they surpassed the ancient Romans in strength, or the Gauls in heroism, or the Greeks in arts, or the nations of modern Europe in provision for the material interests of the temporal society, but that they surpassed all nations and people in piety and religion; and, as the Roman philosopher says, "in that one wisdom by which they perceived that all things are guided and governed by the providence of Almighty God." Full of zeal and faith, their manners, their language, their deeds, were no doubt prodigiously at variance with the standard which is seen and followed wherever the modern philosophy has created legions.

* Enchirid. cap. 27. † Od. I. 184.

They were more anxious that their country should be, as the ancient poet said, with greater accuracy of expression than of thought, θεοφιλεστάτην *, than that it should win martial glory or commercial greatness amongst nations. The inscription on a tower of Ens, in Upper Austria, attesting the tradition of Mark and Luke having converted that country, ascribes to it the highest privilege that was then the object of ambition,—

> " Aspicis exiguam nec magni nominis urbem,
> Quam tamen æternus curat amatque Deus †."

The ancient poet, too, whose verses are still read upon the tomb of Guido, Bishop of Pavia, in the thirteenth century, attests that the inhabitants of that city gloried chiefly in their faith, and in their attachment to ancient manners :—

> " Laudibus immensis exultat plebs Papiensis,
> Antiquum morem retinens, fideique decorem."

" As Rome," says the ancient writer of the Life of St. Zenobius, " is supposed formerly to have rejoiced in the spoils of the slain, so did Florence now exult in the conversion of many to the Giver of eternal victories ‡." Every thing connected with the state bore a Catholic character. On one side of the ancient coin of the Dukes of Florence was seen the lily, as the secular insignia of that city; and on the other, the image of its tutelar saint, with his hand raised in the act of giving his benediction §." Ughelli describes money in the museum of a knight of St. Stephen at Pisa, of which one side showed the hereditary insignia of the Medici, and the other a fearful representation of the last judgment ||.

The leaden seal of Boamund, Prince of Antioch, attached to a diploma of the year 1190, in the archives of the canons of Genoa, represented on one side the prince armed cap-à-pie, on horseback, galloping, holding a banner in his hand; and on the other, the two apostles, St. Peter and St. Paul ¶.

* Æsch. Eumenid. 869.
† Germania Sacra, I. 16.
‡ Italia Sacra, III. 14.
§ Id. III.
|| III. 480.
¶ Id. IV. 878.

The men of these ages clung to the glory of the Catholicity of their state, of their institutions, of their history; and exulted in that prerogative in the same manner as Plato *, Sophocles †, Demosthenes ‡, and Æschylus §, claimed for their nations the honour of being loved by God.

What seemed above every thing admirable in Milan, and worthy of universal praise, was not its wondrous cathedral of marble, nor its venerable Ambrosian basilica, but the devout spirit, the love and reverence for the Divine worship, which, from remote antiquity, had been a characteristic feature in the manners of its citizens ||. "For eternity" says St. Bernard to the Genoese, "I shall never forget your devout people, your honourable race, your illustrious city ¶." In his days, even the grandeur and renown of Genoa were matters of a secondary consideration to its devotion and Catholicity. Venice enjoyed maritime empire and an immense renown; free from remote ages; powerful, not so much by propagating as by preserving liberty; illustrious, from the concord of its citizens, the wisdom of its senate, the order of its magistracy, the equity of its judges, the reverence inspired by its laws, the gravity of the fathers, the obedience of the people, the eloquence of the aged, the modesty of the youth. But all these titles were forgotten, as of no weight in comparison with the glory which belonged to it from having yielded to no city of the world in attachment to the Catholic religion, in which it was born, and in which it grew to that state of magnificence, strength, and felicity, which rendered it the admiration of the world **. "In this, I often considered myself happy," says Simon Majolus, "that I was educated in Asti, that ancient city of Italy, so full of Catholic institutions, and rites, and holy men, and which had been always free from the contagion of heresy ††." Consequently, these were not men corresponding to the type of the poet Ronsard, who could heap his praises equally upon Catholic princes and an Elizabeth of England ‡‡. They had offerings but for one altar.

* Meno. † Œdip. Col. ‡ Epist. IV.
§ Eumenid. 869. || Italia Sacra, IV. 9.
¶ Epist. 129. ** Italia Sacra, Tom. V. 1269.
†† Id. IV 334. ‡‡ In Le Bocage Royal.

The Emperor Valentinian was about to subscribe to the expense of Pagan rites. "What will you answer to the priest," said St. Ambrose to him, with holy zeal, "when he will say to you, 'The Church does not desire your gifts, because you have adorned with presents the temples of the Gentiles? The altar of Christ rejects your donations, because you have made altars to idols; for no man can serve two masters. Why do you seek the priests of God, when you prefer to them the profane petitions of the Gentiles * ?'"

Neither the honour nor the devotion of the middle ages would have merited the praise which Cardan bestows on the dexterity of the freed men of the ancients: "for when," said he, "they were most faithful to their lords, yet they did not incur the resentment of their lord's enemies. Who was more an enemy to Cicero than Anthony? yet the latter's displeasure was not incurred by Laurea or Tiro, although they were men obedient to Cicero; and in like manner did Epaphroditus survive Galba †." "Vivorum bonorum est, admodum irasci," says Cicero ‡." Men who had smiles for all opinions and all actions, would have been considered as calumniating the Author of nature, who gave it the power of indicating displeasure; and as forgetting what is recorded of the immaculate and Divine Lamb himself, who is said to have looked round upon certain Jews with indignation, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, to whom thus two passions are ascribed in one verse. "Woe to the country in which the Church has enemies, and from which the cry of the poor does not rise to Heaven against them!

The philosophy of the middle ages recognized a legitimate object for the exercise of all the passions, which were given by the Creator, and intended for the noblest purposes, and which, when applied according to the design of God, are so many instruments of the highest good. Heavenly graces, in Catholic times, were grafted even upon human asperities, as gardeners contrive to make roses bud from the stem of briars. This is shown by St. Bonaventura, "who says, "Desire belongs to man, that he may long for spiritual and perfect delight;

* Epist. XXX.
† Prudent. Civit. cap. 83.
‡ De Legibus, I. 7.

anger, that he may never consent to crime, or to the enemies of God; grief, that he may feel the enormity of sin, and the wretchedness of exile from his heavenly country; joy, that he may rejoice in God, and in the hope of possessing him for ever; love, that he may love God above all things, and himself and his neighbour for God and according to God, and all the works of God, because made by him; hope, that he may expect mercy and grace in a future life; fear, that he may dread losing God for ever; shame, that he may never dare to commit sin *."

The zeal of the middle ages would never have permitted men to adopt the line of argument proposed by Symmachus to the Emperor Valentinian, when he says, praying that the ancient worship of idols might be maintained, "Each side has its customs and its rites. The Divine mind hath distributed to cities various guardians and modes of worship. It is right to esteem as one and the same whatever all worship. We behold the same stars: the heaven is common. What doth it matter by what prudence each man seeks the truth? There is no possibility of arriving at so great a secret by one journey. But this is the disputation of the idle." Had such language, which is also that of the moderns, been heard in the middle ages, it would have been met with the words of St. Ambrose, who replies on this occasion:—"You say we cannot arrive at so great a secret by one journey! What you know not, we have known by the voice of God; and what you seek by guesses, we have found by the wisdom and truth of God. Therefore, your thoughts agree not with ours †."

Certain it is that the whole spirit of the middle ages was opposed to the system termed of the just medium, which is advanced, and, as we may say, enthroned in these latter days. But how could it have been otherwise, since they were ages of faith, ages of poetry, ages of honour, ages of profound philosophic meditation on the origin and destiny of man. "In nature, as well as in human life, and in moral relations, light and warmth are inseparable: one power, which gives light, imparts warmth; where this is absent, there is eternal darkness,

* De Reformat. Hom. Inter. cap. 20—cap. 36.

† S. Ambrosii Epist. Lib. V. 31.

and also an eternal cold of death*." As Sir Philip Sidney admits, in his letters to Queen Elizabeth, "if a Catholic be a man, he must needs have that manlike property, to desire that other men should be of his mind." Our ancestors, in fact, could no more suppose that one doctrine could be the result of two contrary principles, than that parallels could ever join.

To say nothing of faith, the spirit of the middle ages was too Platonician to admit it. Socrates speaks of men who are a kind of middle character between a philosopher and a politician, who think themselves to be the wisest of men: σοφοὶ δέ ἠγοῦνται εἶναι, he adds, πάνυ εἰκότως· μετρίως μὲν γὰρ φιλοσοφίας ἔχειν, μετρίως δὲ πολιτικῶν, πάνυ ἐξ εἰκότος λόγου, for they partake of both ὅσον ἔδει, and enjoy the fruits of wisdom, without incurring its dangers and contests. "The position of these men," replies Crito, "must be admitted to be specious and plausible." "It is so, indeed," continues Socrates; "but it has more plausibility than truth: for men, and all other things which are placed between two things, must necessarily partake of the nature of both of them. Those that are between evil and good, must be better than one, and worse than the other. Those that are between two good things, and not the same with them, must be worse than either of them. And those that are between two evils, must exceed each of them in evil, inasmuch as they must partake of the evil of the one, superadded to that of the other. So these men, being, in fact, the third from truth, endeavour to seem to be first." After showing that these proud pretenders to superior wisdom, in consequence of their system of just medium, are, in reality, but the third from truth, he concludes by observing that "they are objects rather of pity than of anger†."

Nor is the doctrine of the moderns sanctioned by the Ethic page. "Things, it is true," says Aristotle, who, in language at least, must always be opposed to Plato, "may be corrupted in two ways: either through excess, ὑπερβολῆς· or through deficiency, ὑπ' ἐνδείας‡. The perfect man, therefore, μήτε πλεονάζει, μήτε ἐλλείπει§. True, as he admits, every excellency shuns equally excess

* Fredrich von Schlegel, Philosophie der Geschichte, I. 21.
† Plato, Euthydemus. ‡ Ethic. Lib. II. c. 2.
§ Id. c. 6.

and deficiency, and seeks the true medium; but, then, this medium. he observes, does not consist in the thing, but in ourselves. *μέσον δὲ, οὐ τὸ τοῦ πράγματος, ἀλλὰ τὸ πρὸς ἡμᾶς.* Therefore, this admission is reconcileable with every possible latitude for the development of religion, virtue, and art; because the man whom God has endowed with a great soul and superior ability, may do things which might be excess to another, while to him they constitute the medium. Whereas the supporters of this system stupidly accuse men of exaggeration, if they see them perform deeds which surpass their own power. Moreover, the Stagyrite concludes that, strictly speaking, there can be no excess or deficiency of virtue; for as this consists in the true medium, whenever this is overpassed or unattained, men altogether sin*.

In regard to political and moral relations, their system is equally erroneous, and renders men guilty of what the poet Agatho condemns:—

τό μὲν πάρεργον ἔργον ὡς ἡγούμενοι,
τὸ δ' ἔργον ὡς πάρεργον ἐκπονούμενοι†.

Neutrality in persons, as well as in states, is generally the worst of all parties: it is generally only a system of indifference, and of an egotism ill-disguised, which generally meets with its proper chastisement. Neutrality never secures either honour or glory: it is always more noble and more useful to show oneself a faithful friend or a declared opponent, than to remain indifferent to all the world, and render service to no one‡. So thought Tasso:—

"Except Tatine, none
Of all the Greeks went with the Christian host:
O sin, O shame, O Greece, accurs'd alone!
Did not this fatal war affront thy coast;
Yet sattest thou an idle looker-on,
And glad attendest which side won or lost:
Now, if thou be a bond slave vile become,
No wrong is that, but God's most righteous doom§."

* Ethic. Nicom. Lib. II. c. Magna Moralia, Lib. II. c. 3.
† Clemens Alex. Stromat. Lib. V. 14.
‡ De Haller, Restauration de la Science Politique, Tom. III. 406. § I. 51.

This system of worldly wisdom, moderation, and liberality, in all ages, might be typified by the treason of Ganelon, in persuading Charlemagne not to follow the dictates of his own heroic generosity. While "faith," as Tertullian says, "knows of no necessities *," this rule of life admits the necessity of Euripides, to kill one's mother, which the Stagyrite says is only to be laughed at †.

The Catholic prudence of the middle ages dictated gracious thoughts, and rendered the language of men so amiable, that the Church could exclaim, "From the mouth of the prudent proceedeth honey; the sweetness of honey is under his tongue, and his lips distil sweetness." The reformed prudence of modern times, which has the thoughts of Judas, sanctions and applauds Pilate's motive, who became a deicide, "volens populo satisfacere ‡." Men call this latter prudence liberality, the just medium: Hell knows it under the name of Atheism. There its wretched victims were seen by the great Dante, when he descended in spirit to those regions of eternal grief:—

"O master! what is this I hear? What race
Are these, who seem so overcome with woe?
He thus to me: 'This miserable fate
Suffer the wretched souls of those who liv'd
Without or praise or blame, with that ill band
Of angels mix'd, who nor rebellious prov'd,
Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
Were only. From his bounds Heaven drove them forth,
Not to impair his lustre; nor the depth
Of hell receives them, lest th' accursed tribe
Should glory thence with exultation vain §.'"

During the ages of faith, this wretched state was known only as a thing that had been weighed and condemned. "There are men," says St. Bonaventura, "who calumniate virtue; who call silence melancholy, gravity pride, the zeal of justice rash judgment, the repose and tranquillity of devotion laziness and indifference, mortification indiscretion, simplicity folly, the fear of God vain scruples, spiritual retreat the love of singu-

* De Cor. Mil.
† Ethic. Lib. III. c. 1.
‡ Marc. xv. 15.
§ Hell, III.

larity, modesty hypocrisy *. St. Theresa also describes men who always fear that a good action will cause a great mischief, and who seem as if the demon had taught them to prophesy future evils a thousand years before they arrive. The unerring text does not deem it sufficient to say, in praise of one whom it commends, that prudence is in the word of his mouth, without adding that wisdom rested in his heart. In contradistinction to the fears of prudence without wisdom, the spirit of the middle ages required men to throw themselves upon the sea like St. Peter. "If I were a person who might be desired to give my opinion," says their great representative, in regard of the noble mystic spirit, "I would never advise any person that, when any good inspiration did often move and set upon a soul, it should give it over for fear of not performing the work. For, if one go on merely and purely for the only love of our Lord, there needs be no fear at all of good success, since the same Lord is powerful enough to prevail in all things; and let him be ever blessed. Amen †."

It is in life, as in many arts with such prudent minds, "Dum satis putant vitio carere, in idipsum incidunt vitium, quod virtutibus carent." St. Bonaventura is of the same opinion:—"O devout soul, in whom Christ is at length spiritually born, fly now from the society of the wicked! Ascend with Mary; seek the counsels of spiritual men; endeavour to follow in the footsteps of the perfect; contemplate the words and actions of the good; fly from the poisonous counsels of the perverse, who always seek to pervert and to hinder, and to quench the new inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and who, under the appearance of good and piety, pour out their venom of impious tepidity into the soul, saying, 'What you begin is too great, too arduous, intolerable, beyond your strength. Such things become not your state: your honour and respect will be diminished by them. 'Heu heu! quot et quantos maledicta mundialium consilia supplantaverunt, et conceptum in eis per Spiritum Sanctum Dei Filium extinxerunt.'" This is that miserable and deadly potion which kills and extinguishes the fixed resolve. But there are others who seem, and per-

* De Sept. Grad. Vit. Spiritual, cap. 52.

† The Life of the Holy Mother St. Theresa, I. 6.

haps are, good and religious, and yet, 'salvâ eorum reverentia,' who are too timid, not remarking that, as yet, the hand of the Lord has not been shortened; having a zeal towards God, but not according to knowledge, as when, through compassion for corporal affliction, or fear of natural weakness, what they see others perform manfully, and what they judge to be good and holy, they do not dare to begin themselves, and even keep back others from the works of perfection, dissuading them, and saying that these things exceed the state of ordinary life, or that they do not agree with their imperfection, and will, therefore, furnish a just ground for accusing them of hypocrisy. Do you, then, O soul! fly from these unlearned counsels, and ascend the mountain with Mary*."

What is the intelligence which can determine the just medium in religion? Duns Scotus says that there can be no excess in tending to God by desire†: and St. Bernard says, that the measure of the love of God is to have no measure. "If you have an infirm and earthly mind," says St. Bonaventura, and the men who would modify and give laws to the Church are not, in general, men exactly of empyrean conceit, "you will consider the least services as the greatest, and what is as nothing will seem most difficult to you; and those things which you would willingly do for yourself, or for the lowest friend, you will think too grievous to be done for the Highest God. The infirm eye will abhor the irradiations of the true sun of justice, and will desire to walk in darkness; you will triumph over spiritual men, and you will not know that you are yourself triumphed over by demons‡."

The steady uncompromising zeal of the piety of the middle ages is obnoxious to the taste of modern philosophers. Little can they understand the constancy of that poor Queen, Mary of Scots, to suffer an imprisonment of nineteen years, and then a cruel death, when, as Stephen Pasquier remarks, if she had renounced the Catholic religion, she knew that her prison doors would have flown open immediately§. They would have men

* S. Bonaventura de quinque Festivitatibus pueri, Tom. I.
† In Lib. III. Sentent. Dist. XXVI. 9. 1.
‡ Stimul. Divin. Amoris, Pars II. cap. 5.
§ Recherches de la France, Lib. VI. 15.

imitate Alcibiades, who used to be seen, when at Athens, jesting, and keeping horses, and adopting an agreeable mode of life; but, when at Sparta, cutting off his hair, and wearing a cloak, and using the cold bath; when in Thrace, fighting and drinking; and when he visited Tissaphernes, assuming the habits of luxury and effeminate refinement, and, wherever he went, adopting the manners of those with whom he found himself.

The middle ages, on the contrary, admired Epaminondas or Agesilaus, for, though conversing with many different men, and visiting various cities, they always and every where preserved their own manners and dress, and mode of life. They admired Plato, for being the same at Syracuse as in the academy, and with Dionysius as when with Dion *. These former are men "rather point-device in their accoutrements; as loving themselves, than seeming lovers of any other." They fancy that they appear most wise, when they make the greatest outward show of indifference: keeping whatever religious sentiment they may possess buried within their own breast, as if it were a treasure for themselves alone, which no one else might even look at. In truth, however, they are generally men without any fixed determined principles: at one moment they are heard eulogizing the Catholic religion; and at another, condemning and scorning it; like the Emperor Adrian, who, at one time, proposes to have Christ adored as God, and at another, persecutes those who worship him. The man of this class is described by Socrates as one who calls anarchy liberty, intemperance grandeur of soul, and insolence the mark of a right education. When grown old, if he should subside into a less troubled state, it will be only to give up the command of himself to whoever shall fall to him, as it were by drawing of lots: one time the slave to this man, and another to that; having an equal respect for all, *οὐδεμίαν ἀτιμάζων, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἴσον τρέφων·* and not regarding as true the saying which may be addressed to him, that there are some pleasures proceeding from good and honourable desires, and others from evil; and that it is necessary to pursue and honour the one, but to punish and enslave the other. But from all this he dissents with a throwing up of his head, and says that all

* Vide Plutarch de Dignos. Ver. Amic. IX.

are the same, and that they are to be honoured alike, *καὶ ὁμοίας φησὶν ἁπάσας εἶναι, καὶ τιμητέας ἐξ ἴσου.* So he lives every day, indulging graciously in every desire that occurs to him: one time, getting drunk and playing on the flute; at another, drinking only water, and confining himself to a slender diet; at another, stripping himself for the gymnasium. There is a time when he is indolent and indifferent to every thing; and there is another when he applies diligently to philosophy. Very often he takes part in political affairs; and, as it were by starts and bounds, he says and does whatever happens to please him. If he should ever feel a zeal for certain wars, he is borne in that direction; or for making money, he is carried off in that. And there is never any order or necessity to him through life, but, considering this kind of existence sweet, and liberal, and happy, he continues it to the last. Such is the life of a man enjoying all things equally, corresponding in character to that of the democratical state *.

He who does not recognize in this portrait the opposition between Catholic and modern times, when it is expressly said that ancient manners should be changed for new, corresponding to the political constitutions recently adopted, will have read Plato but to little purpose, or have but marvellous scanty knowledge of the philosophy of these two epochs in the history of man.

If we now consider the zeal and fervour of the ages of faith in relation to that standard of the beatitudes which they endeavoured with all their strength to follow, we shall find still stronger grounds for preferring them to the system which has been created by the indifference of latter times. "It is one thing," says Richard of St. Victor, "to follow good from desire, and another from mere counsel; it is one thing to do good with great delight, and another from deliberation alone. The one is good, like silver; the other is best, like gold †." "What a difference," he exclaims, in another place, "between cold and red-hot iron, between soul and soul, between the tepid and him who is inflamed with Divine love ‡."

* Plato de Repub. Lib. VIII.

† R. de S. Victor, de Eruditione Hominis Interioris, Lib. I. 24.

‡ Id. de Gradibus Violentæ Charitatis.

To the gift of strength and courage corresponds the fourth beatitude,—"Beati qui esuriunt;" for it requires great strength, as St. Augustin says, "to labour and obtain the sovereign good, and to leave earthly things." And St. Thomas says, that "it is an arduous thing, not only to do good, but to do it with thirst and avidity." O how majestic and inspiring are the words of St. Bonaventura!—"We must hold the lance of zeal against the assault of vice, against the attacks of the devil, of the flesh, and of the world. Of this lance we read in Jeremiah, 'Polite lanceas, induite vos loricis.' It is with the lance of zeal that we must contend against evil. If you do not hold out the lance of zeal against vice in this world, God will put forth the lance of his wrath against you in judgment."

The zeal of the middle ages had, indeed, nothing to recommend it to the favour of utilitarian philosophers, or of self-interested reformers. "We have in our days," says Fuller, "many who are forward to offer to God such zeal which not only cost them nothing, but wherewith they have gained great estates*." Such was not the Catholic zeal; neither did it resemble that of the mother of James and John, who came to adore Jesus, but only to ask that her sons might be promoted to dignity. Still less was it the zeal of Machiavelian sophists and artful rulers, who, like Catherin de Medicis, and Richelieu, Cranmer, and Elizabeth, wrought so many deeds of hypocritical renown. "All that," as Pasquier says, "was done under a different banner from ours; for those who were born under the true religion, knew that they had to maintain it Christian by zeal and devotion, not by political discourses, unless they wished to spoil all†." But it was the fervour of a Peter, the affection of a John, the sorrow of a Magdalen, the constancy of an Andrew. It was the zeal which Dante heard commemorated "amidst refining flames, when two spirits of the swiftly-moving crowd, which overtook him, cried, weeping, 'Blessed Mary,' sought with haste the hilly region‡." It was the zeal of the shepherds and of the magi, who came to Bethlehem:—"You see how the shepherds hasten," says St. Ambrose, "for no one

* Thoughts, 345.
† Recherches de la France, III. 38.
‡ Purg. XVIII.

with indifference seeks Christ*." It was the compliment of that character which the Church ascribes to her lay confessors, when she exclaims, "Ecce homo sine querela, verus Dei cultor, abstinens se ab omni malo, et permanens in innocentia sua."

By the law of nature, by the command of God, and by the consent of all nations, is the reasonable creature bound to evince zeal for the honour of the Creator. Hear, O ye supporters of the just medium! how a heathen sage reasoned within himself, when he heard men attack a mere abstract question, which involved, according to his judgment, the interests of Divine truth:—"For I was afraid," he says, "lest it would not be holy, having been present when justice was reproached, and when it was said to be less than injustice, a source of happiness, to give up, *καί μὴ βοηθεῖν, ἔτι ἐμπνέοντα, καὶ δυνάμενον φθέγγεσθαι*†."

It was not strange, therefore, that those who hungered and thirsted after justice, should have been always ready to say, with holy Israel's king, "Zelus domus tuæ comedit me:" evincing the zeal of an Ignatius for the glory of God, the zeal of a St. Louis for the exaltation of the Church, the zeal of the knight templar for the defence of oppressed brethren, the zeal of an Eligius for the salvation of men's souls, and for the reducing all things to the obedience of faith.

Men must needs possess hearts but little alive to the holy delicacy of the faith, who are unable to comprehend or justly appreciate the form of expression which the zeal of the middle ages frequently adopted. What more beautiful offerings could they have made to Heaven, than their trust, their reverence, their love, the overflowing sentiments of their souls? Lewis of Grenada points out this zeal in contrast with the admonitions of human prudence. "Penitent Magdalen comes to Jesus: rightly," saith he, "but yet, O woman! you should wait for a proper time, that you may find the Physician alone, that you may not make your conversion a fable to the world. No time is less proper for tears and confession of sins than the moment of a feast. Wait a little, then, till the guests depart, and then you may have a fitting season for weeping and penitence. 'I cannot,' she replies, 'endure the

* Lib. II. in cap. 2. Lucæ. † Plato de Repub. II.

horrible face of sin, even for this short space.' And so we behold this prudent woman fearing neither the number of the guests, nor the judgment of men, nor the contempt of the Pharisees, and coming instantly into the presence of Jesus, when, not content with watering his feet with her tears, she wipes them with the hairs of her head. Who ever heard of such service offered to any king or emperor, that his feet should be wiped with the golden hair of women? Such, however, is the zeal of true disciples to consecrate every thing beautiful to Christ *."

The moderns, if we judge from their general manner of philosophizing, would discover in an act of this kind superstition or hypocrisy, and the device of a sensual unenlightened piety: our Lord has, however, decided against them:—"Propter quod dico tibi, remittuntur ei peccata multa, quoniam dilexit multum." The lily, which is seen in so many of the old devout paintings of saints, was, in fact, a symbol of the delicate susceptibility belonging to the zeal of the middle ages. "The lily," as Christine de Pisan says, "is a tender flower, 'et de moult petit hurt est froissié et taché.'" Such was the affectionate devotion of men, that they would have shunned the least indication of neglect and indifference as a crime. Moderate in their expression, guarded and timid in their judgment, "jure videri" being their strongest sentence, always did those who had imbibed the genuine influence of the Catholic religion, take in the visage the stamp of that right zeal, which, with due temperature, glows in the bosom †.

The faith of the middle ages was, in a certain degree, the fruit of their zeal, as Lewis of Grenada observed, "For faith," said he, "is lost, when a man leads an idle useless life; in accordance with that sentence of our Lord, 'Qui habet, dabitur ei et abundabit: ab eo autem qui non habet, et quod videtur habere auferetur ab eo.'" And St. Ambrose likewise says, that "faith unexercised quickly withers away, dries up, and passes into perfidy or heresy."

In conclusion, one may observe, that to the eye of faith the character of the middle ages appears most admirable, when viewed in contrast with the materiality

* Ludovic. Grantens. in Festo B. Mariæ Magdal. Concio. I.

† Dante, Purg. VIII.

and indifference to all interests of a spiritual nature which have superseded it in the society of later times. From the dawn of the religious revolution, the progress of human minds in this direction became perceptible. Shakspeare himself, who is seated so near Dante, may occasionally furnish an example; for in what does he fall short of the great master, unless in that impressive zeal and constancy and lofty grandeur, which distinguish the fervent disciple? It is that he has the wavering of an age of criticism or of transition. One perceives that the spirit of Luther had already breathed upon Europe, and that clouds of doubt had collected upon the horizon, threatening to darken by degrees the beautiful sky of the old Catholic poesy. Accordingly one, who has drank deep of the spirit of antiquity, proceeds now through the fields of modern literature like Dante through the region of ice in hell, of which he says, "and I, trembling, went through that eternal chillness." When exposed to the influence of the books of modern sophists, the minds of men appear to become frost-bound and contracted: these pestilential streams are sure of their effect, however warm and generous may be the natural disposition of the nation which they ravage; like those Alpine waters of the Po, in the rich Lombardian plain, which astonish the traveller under the resplendant sun of Italy, by their cold and savage paleness.

"It would be in vain to dissemble," says Pelisson, "it is to an indifference and to a general uncertainty of doctrines and religion, that the confused ideas of our brethren lead us insensibly, but quite straight; they cannot even themselves stop it where they would wish, however they may talk about fundamental points *."

During the middle ages, men the farthest removed from ecclesiastical influence, like Cardan, were ready to admit the proposition which he lays down in his work on wisdom, that "no manner of governing a republic can be useful which is disjoined from religion †." But, in the general shock given to ancient principles, those which related to the stability of empire were also questioned or set aside. In the reign of the last Valois, a party was formed in France, among the great, under the name of "the Political," which chose a middle place between the

* Reflections sur les Differends de la Religion, Sect. VI.

† De Sapientia, Lib. V.

Catholics and Protestants; and thus opened the way to that social materialism, of which we live to see the development.

Francis I., through hostility to Charles V., calling the Turks into Europe, and Don Pedro II., of Arragon, joining the party of the Albigenses in France, Henry II. persecuting the religious innovators in France, and encouraging them in Germany, Philip II. of Spain secretly fomenting the internal wars of France, and making religion an instrument of his ambition, Henry III., a Machiavelian scholar and disciple of Catherine, who carried religious indifference to the greatest length, endeavouring to find a balance between faith and heresy, Henry IV. forming an alliance with all the Protestant sovereigns of the north, in order to injure the house of Austria, Richelieu pursuing his reasons of state, with utter indifference to the vital interests of religion, transferring the government of the Valteline, which was Catholic, from Spain to the Protestant Grisons,—exciting the Protestant princes of Germany to carry devastation into the Catholic countries of the south, and seeking every occasion to strengthen their force, Mazarine following in his footsteps, the Congress of Munster sanctioning the doctrine that the interests of the earth were totally foreign from those of Heaven, and that, in matters of religion, every thing was true which suited the purpose of kings, who were independent of the law of God,—publicly establishing the principle of government, that there was nothing real in society but its material interests, and that truth and error could no longer be distinguished, rulers, and often tyrants, employing the ceremonies of faith for a worldly end, as Thucydides says of the Lacedæmonians, that their armies marched to the sound of many flutes, *οὐ τοῦ θείου χάριν*, but that by means of the rythm, they might be kept from falling into disorder *, France, supporting the pretensions of Sweden, and every concession to the most determined enemies of the Catholics, her government taking offence at the cry from the pulpits which resounded with the persecutions of the Catholics in England, and when the poet, Louis Dorleans, warning the French to beware of heresy and tyranny, lest they should suffer the same persecution, published a discourse to that end, which

* Lib. V. 10.

De Thou ascribes to his fanaticism, ordering the work to be burnt, and banishing the printer from France*,—all these men thus, as Pasquier says, Machiavelizing, in order to gain the reputation of ability, and ascribing every devout act to the subtilty of worldly wisdom, using the pitiful shifts of policy, and professing to follow the royal road of those saintly potentates who defended the church of God in former times, while even the unreflecting people could clearly enough discern that they were only treading in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice—prepared the way for the establishment of that purely earthly republic, in which the thirst after justice is superseded by the thirst for advancement, and the authority of highest God made subservient to that of man; as if the popular notions of the day were the sentence of a supreme, almighty tribunal—final and irresistible. For have you not marked the reply which is on every tongue when there is mention of sanctity and justice? Is it not always made in such terms as these—"Who can resist the spirit of the age, the force of public opinion, the will of the people?" Such was the language of those foul worshippers in the Apocalypse of blessed John, who were heard crying out, in their stupid admiration, "Quis similis bestiæ?" That is, "Who can do such great things, and who can fight against him?" that is, resist his will? "For," says Richard of St. Victor, "with such admiration will the reprobate regard anti-Christ, that they will think it impossible for any one, by retaining his faith, to resist him†." The wisest of men acknowledge that it will be difficult. "We must do as others do—it is the custom of the world." "Væ tibi flumen moris humani," cries St. Augustin; "quis resistit tibi? quamdiu non siccaberis ‡?"

There is no point against which the holy Fathers warn men more repeatedly than this. "Beware," says St. Eucherius to Valerian, "of the maxim, that we should do and think with the multitude. What will it serve us to have followed this multitude, when we shall appear at the tribunal of God? Will it be there to defend us? Will its folly justify ours? Let us beware of such a de-

* Gouget, Bibliotheq. Française, Tom. XV. 269.
† Super Apocalypium, Lib. IV. c. 4.
‡ S. August. Confess. Lib. XVI.

lusion. Let us not renounce salvation and happiness because such a multitude lose themselves: let us not cease to watch because they sleep: let us not harden our hearts because they are insensible."

We read of the Jews, infected by the manners of the Gentiles, that the holy places were profaned and the solemn festivals no longer observed: "Nec simpliciter Judæum se esse quisquam confitebatur *." So it was in Catholic society when the atmosphere of the new opinions began to encompass it. No one had courage simply to confess himself a Catholic, but either he was one more liberal or discerning, or in some way distinguished so as to recommend himself to the favour of those who had practically or avowedly renounced the faith: he criticized, objected, modified, conceded—till at length, weak man! he experienced what is described by Plato, that, "yielding step by step a little, these small concessions all accumulating, at last there was a great deception; and opposite to what he had at first contemplated, and like those who play at the game of peteia without sufficient skill, who find themselves at length excluded from the line without having wherewithal to resume their place in it, so this man in the end was excluded, and had not wherewith to answer in this other kind of peteia, which consisted not in pegs, but in reasons†."

Ah! these cavils of the moderns, calling out for modification, indicated a spirit widely at contrast with that of the lovers of justice during the ages of faith, when men regarded the Church with lovers' eyes, as Thucydides says of the Athenians in regard to their city—contemplating, day by day, its power and grandeur, and being as it were its suitors, *καὶ ἐραστὰς γιγνομένους αὐτῆς* ‡.

Philosophy herself might have prevented men from being deceived here. "If," says Socrates, "we affirm of a person, that he loves any thing, it is necessary that he should show if we affirm truly concerning him, that he does not love one part of the object, and not another, but that he loves it all, *οὐ τὸ μὲν φιλοῦντα ἐκείνου, τὸ δὲ μή, ἀλλὰ πᾶν στέργοντα*. Witness the disposition of men in the love which binds them to their dearest friends. In

* Lib. II. Machab. 6. † De Repub. Lib. VI.
‡ Thucyd. Lib. II. 43.

these they love even what might seem defects. They have praise even for every variety of feature. Are they of dark complexion? they have a manly aspect. Are they fair? they are the children of the gods: and so with every thing, in such a manner, that none are excluded from favour. They that love wine too have an excuse for every sort that might be inferior, loving all wine: and men that are ambitious of honour, if they cannot have the command of armies, accept that of a company; and if they are not honoured by the greater and more noble class, they love to receive homage from the lesser and baser, being altogether lovers of honour. So that when we say that any one loves something, we mean to imply, that he loves it in every form. In like manner, then, the philosopher is said to be a lover of wisdom; not a lover of one part only and not of another, but of all wisdom*."

How then could it be said that a man loved the Church—and without that love, what was he in the eyes of Heaven?—if he were continually objecting to some part or other of its discipline, or even perhaps of its doctrine, according to the delusion of the moment, instead of evincing a universal and generous effusion of heart, in tenderest love for every thing that had relation to the mysterious mother of faith and sanctity?

I know indeed the censure to which such reflections will expose those who utter them from the men who have the words liberality and moderation ever on their tongue. As this is not the moment to meet them in close combat, it will be better for the present to fly than to await their impetuous onset; for the modern disputant comes upon the Catholic like Scamander when she rushed against Achilles, calling out to her sister Simous, thinking to vanquish him by means of a flood of waters, to wash him away, as a shepherd boy when caught by the wintry torrent. It was a fire which the poet summoned to the assistance of his hero; and it will be well to remember that it is the fire of divine charity which will furnish the most effectual means of repelling the mortal influence of that cold and desolating flood, hitherto unnamed by human tongues, which is directed to overwhelm all that is divine and heroic, under one uniform and cheerless waste.

* De Repub. V.

But it is time to bring this Fifth Book to a close. We have seen what was the thirst for justice during the ages of faith: we have seen how it was indicated in the recognized vanity of earthly possessions, in the unwearied voice of the Church night and day, supplicating—in the solemn and beautiful order of the festivals, in the love and fervour with which they were every where celebrated, and finally, in the devout spirit and holy practices of even that class of men, who were the farthest removed from the sanctifying influence of the Christian altars.

It remains to inquire, what is the evidence of history respecting the temporal verification of the Divine sentence, that those who experienced that thirst should be filled: and a review of its visible effects and consequences shall therefore be our occupation in the next Book.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

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